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*ST. GILES' LECTURES—FOURTH SERIES*

THE  
CHURCHES OF CHRISTENDOM

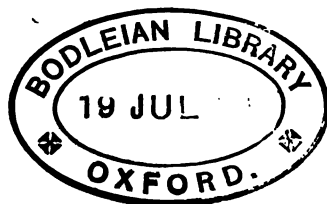


THE  
CHURCHES OF CHRISTENDOM

PRIMITIVE CHURCH  
CHURCH OF FIRST AND SECOND CENTURIES  
CHURCH OF FOURTH AND FIFTH CENTURIES  
GREEK CHURCH  
LATIN CHURCH  
CHURCH OF THE WALDENSES  
LUTHERAN CHURCH  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCHES  
ANGLICAN CHURCH  
SOCIETY OF FRIENDS, AND CONGREGATIONALISTS  
METHODIST CHURCH  
UNITY AND VARIETY OF THE CHURCHES

EDINBURGH  
MACNIVEN AND WALLACE

MDCCCLXXXIV



## PREFATORY NOTE.

THIS Volume contains a Fourth Course of Lectures delivered in St. Giles' Cathedral, Edinburgh, on Sunday afternoons in 1883-84. The Subject of which they treat—the differing faiths of Christendom—is one which must have a deep, if a sorrowful interest for many. It was the earnest desire of the promoters of this Course of Lectures that the subjects discussed, involving necessarily matters of controversy and difference of opinion, should be treated in a fair and generous spirit. It is believed the reader will be of opinion that this desire on their part has, on the whole, been well carried out. Should, however, any exception be found, it is necessary to state that each Lecturer is only responsible for his own contribution.

All the Lectures were delivered also in St. Mary's Parish Church, Dundee.

ST. GILES', EDINBURGH,  
*May 1884.*





## CONTENTS.

LECTURE	PAGE
I. THE PRIMITIVE OR APOSTOLIC AND SUB- APOSTOLIC CHURCH, . . . . .	1
By the REV. ALEXANDER F. MITCHELL, D.D., Professor of Ecclesiastical History, St. Mary's College, St. Andrews.	
II. THE CHURCH OF THE SECOND AND THIRD CENTURIES, . . . . .	37
By the REV. WILLIAM MILLIGAN, D.D., Professor of Biblical Criticism in the University of Aberdeen.	
III. THE CHURCH OF THE FOURTH AND FIFTH CENTURIES, . . . . .	73
By the REV. WILLIAM STEWART, D.D., Professor of Divinity and Biblical Criticism in the University of Glasgow.	
IV. THE GREEK CHURCH, . . . . .	113
By the REV. JAMES CAMERON LEES, D.D., Minister of St. Giles' Cathedral, and one of Her Majesty's Chaplains.	
V. THE LATIN CHURCH, . . . . .	145
By the REV. JOHN WATT, B.D., Minister of the Parish of Anderston, Glasgow.	
VI. THE CHURCH OF THE WALDENSES, . . . . .	181
By the REV. A. K. H. BOYD, D.D., First Minister of St. Andrews.	

LECTURE	PAGE
VII. THE LUTHERAN CHURCH, . . . . .	217
By the Rev. H. G. GRAHAM, Minister of the Parish of Nenthorn.	
VIII. THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCHES, . . . . .	253
By the Rev. COLIN CAMPBELL, B.D., Minister of the Parish of Dundee.	
IX. THE ANGLICAN CHURCH, . . . . .	293
By the Rev. JOHN MARSHALL LANG, D.D., Minister of the Barony Parish, Glasgow.	
X. THE SOCIETY OF FRIENDS, AND THE CON- GREGATIONAL CHURCHES, . . . . .	329
By the Rev. W. W. TULLOCH, B.D., Minister of the Maxwell Parish Church, Glasgow.	
XI. THE METHODIST CHURCH, . . . . .	365
By the Rev. A. WALLACE WILLIAMSON, M.A., Junior Minister of the Parish of St. Cuthbert's, Edin- burgh.	
XII. UNITY AND VARIETY OF THE CHURCHES OF CHRISTENDOM, . . . . .	401
By the Very Rev. JOHN TULLOCH, D.D., LL.D., Principal of St. Mary's College, St. Andrews, Dean of the Order of the Thistle, and one of Her Majesty's Chaplains for Scotland.	



# ST. GILES' LECTURES.

*FOURTH SERIES—THE CHURCHES OF CHRISTENDOM.*

## *LECTURE I.*

### THE PRIMITIVE OR APOSTOLIC AND SUB-APOSTOLIC CHURCH.

By the REV. ALEXANDER F. MITCHELL, D.D., Professor of Ecclesiastical History, St. Mary's College, St. Andrews.

WHEN three years ago I lectured in this place on 'Pre-reformation Scotland,' I told you that the Reformation of the Sixteenth century was, with the exception of the introduction of Christianity into the world, the grandest and noblest revolution which has left its mark on the history of our race. I little thought then that it should fall to my lot to speak to you of that far grander revolution, and that too on the day when our Protestant brethren in so many lands are commemorating the fourth centenary of the birth of him who was honoured of God to initiate and largely to determine the shape of the glorious movement which was as life from the dead to the nations of Northern Europe. But before Him whom

the Eternal Father sent forth in the fulness of time to initiate this more glorious movement, to unfold His purposes of mercy to our ruined race, and by His self-sacrificing life and atoning death work out our redemption, all human heroes pale, and at His feet Luther and Melanchthon, Calvin and Knox, Cranmer and Latimer rejoice to cast their crowns. In a true sense His blessed mission had been prepared for both among the people of the ancient covenant, and the heathen world around, as was fully shown in the important course of lectures on the 'Faiths of the World' delivered in this place two years ago. Yet while we thank God that it was so, and that He had never left Himself without a witness in the world and in the hearts and consciences of men, we must not forget what the father of modern church history has placed so prominently in the foreground of his great work, that Christianity is no mere system of truth or morals springing out of the hidden depths of man's nature or evolved in the natural development of the race, but that it is 'a new divine power which descended from heaven in the person of Jesus of Nazareth.' He is ἀρχή or first cause of the new as of the old creation, the second Adam, the Lord from heaven, head of the Church 'which is His body, the fulness of Him who filleth all in all.' He is 'the fountain of that stream of light and life which has since flowed unbroken through nations and ages, and which will continue to flow till the earth shall be full of His praise, and every tongue shall confess that He is Lord.' His incarnation and life, His death and resurrection, His reign in glory and continued presence with His people on earth, are the spring and originating cause of all those

holy and blessed results which have been since achieved or shall hereafter be so till He come again. 'The history of His Church is a continuous commentary on His promise, "Lo, I am with you alway, even to the end of the world." Throughout the Christian centuries we see the Saviour moving along in the fulness of His grace, revealing Himself in the most diverse personalities, and making them the organs of His Spirit, His will, His truth, and His peace. The apostles and martyrs, the apologists and fathers of the Church, the schoolmen and mystics, the reformers, and all those countless witnesses whose names are indelibly engraven on the pages of the Church's history, form one choir sending up an eternal anthem of praise to the Redeemer, and bearing most emphatic testimony that His gospel is no fable or fancy, but power and life, peace and joy—in a word, all that man can wish of grace or glory.' Christ himself is still the highest evidence of Christianity, and such examples, embodying Christ anew as it were, also speak more forcibly than any mere intellectual demonstration or abstract theory, as well as bring home to us the real oneness of the Church under all outward diversities of forms and administrations.

In regard to the special subject assigned to me in the course of lectures now begun, I think it right to say at the outset that I take for granted, what I believe has been again and again proved, that the facts on which our holy religion is based, and with which the history of the primitive Church is bound up, are substantially as they are set before us in the historical books of the New Testament, and as they have been held fast in all ages by the Church, and that He of whom these

books and that Church bear witness is indeed the Messiah promised to the fathers, the light of the world, the life of men, yea, our Lord and our God. That God our heavenly Father so loved our erring race as to give His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life, that He gave Him up unto death for us all, that He declared Him to be His Son with power by His resurrection from the dead, and exalted Him far above all might and majesty and dominion, and every name that is named, and thus laid the foundation of that fellowship which is destined to gather into its embrace men of every kindred and tongue and nation, I believe to be the sum of that gospel which was announced by Himself and His earliest disciples, and which is still honoured as the power of God unto salvation—the divinely appointed means of bringing subjects into His kingdom, and adding members to His Church. The latter of these two words, which has held such a place in the records of the ages that have since elapsed, so far as we know, was used only twice by our Lord himself. Both in His discourses and parables He loved rather to speak of the kingdom He was to found—that kingdom which came not with outward show, but whose heavenly powers were already among men and within them; which was small in its beginnings like the grain of mustard seed, and yet expanded into a tree in whose branches the birds of the air might lodge; which was invisible in its subtle might like the leaven hid in the measures of meal, and working on till the whole was leavened; which was to be prized as the hidden treasure or the pearl of great price, and sought and gained at any

cost. This kingdom, if it is at all to be identified with the Church, is to be identified with it only in its ideal aspect, not with the Church as it has been or shall be while, as Augustine says, there are *multi foris oves multi lupi intus*, but as it shall be when all God's chosen are gathered in, and all that offend are cast out, and as a glorious Church it shall be presented to the Father by its divine head without spot or wrinkle or any such thing. Indeed the latter no less than the former should be recognised as having an ideal aspect, as not merely a temple in process of being built, and of which the true proportions and magnificence can only be disclosed to view when it has been completed and the scaffolding used in its erection has been removed, but still more as a living organism, growing by an internal and gradual process, drawing from without and assimilating to itself as other living things do, and only after a season of immaturity—it may be a long season,—attaining its full development and ultimate perfection, just as the human body to which it is so often compared has its seasons of infancy, youth, and perfect manhood.

The original term of which our word 'church' is generally employed as the equivalent is *ἐκκλησία*, which is still current in modern Greek, was early transferred into Latin and, slightly changed, into the Celtic and Romanic languages. It is derived from the verb *ἐκκαλέω*, I call or choose out, and primarily signifies an assembly called or summoned by some lawful authority. In this sense it was used in Athenian city life, and in the same sense it is often found in the Septuagint, though occasionally both there and in the New Testament it is used of an assembly whether



legitimately called or not (as in Acts xix. of the unruly gathering at Ephesus). It seems to be used in a threefold sense in Scripture ; first, to denote the whole company of believers that yet have been, or hereafter shall be, brought into saving union with Christ their head—the ideal yet destined to become the real Church—the invisible Church of our standards—as in Eph. i. 22, 23, and Eph. v. 25, 26, 27 ; secondly : to designate the general company of professing Christians throughout the world—the visible Catholic Church—in which the good and evil, the real and seeming, are mingled together, as in Cor. xii. 28 ; thirdly : to denote a single congregation of Christians, a particular local church, as in Acts viii. 1 ; xiii. 1. The Christian congregations of a country or nation are not generally spoken of in the New Testament as ‘the church,’ but as ‘the churches,’ as in 1 Cor. xvi., Gal. i. In Acts ix. 31, however, while the *textus receptus* reads *αἱ ἐκκλησῖαι*, the most competent critics in our own day prefer the reading *ἡ ἐκκλησία* in the singular—so that it should be translated (not ‘the churches,’ but) ‘the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria.’

It was on the day of Pentecost, the festival observed by God’s ancient people as the day for offering the first-fruits of the harvest to Him, and as the anniversary of the giving of His law to their fathers, that the first-fruits of the spiritual harvest were gathered in, and the new and better covenant was formally inaugurated. That was the true birthday of the Church on which its risen and glorified Lord bestowed the gifts He had received for men, and according to His promise poured down the fulness of the Spirit on His waiting

disciples. The Spirit thus so plentifully given, besides fitting them by extraordinary gifts and influences for special service as missionaries and witnesses for their blessed Master, and quickening and intensifying the divine life in their souls, 'combined them as they had never been combined before by an internal and spiritual bond of cohesion into one organic whole.' Thereby they became, in a new and higher sense, one with Him and with each other—with new life and love consecrated themselves to His service, and set themselves to build up for Him a kingdom which is 'the greatest fact in history' as it has proved the highest blessing to the world. To the Church thus baptized with the Holy Ghost and with fire, there were added daily such as were in the process of being saved—on her very birthday about three thousand souls, then about five thousand men, then multitudes, both of men and women, then a great company of the priests, then numerous converts throughout Judea and Galilee and Samaria. At length the blessed movement spread beyond Palestine through unnamed evangelists. Those of Cyprus and Cyrene went as far as to Antioch in Syria, and addressing themselves to Gentiles as well as Jews, were honoured to found the mother Church of Gentile Christendom. The work was continued by Barnabas and Saul, so lately a bloody persecutor, but who had now obtained mercy, and who, as Paul the Apostle, was to make known the love and long-suffering of his adored Redeemer in so many places where no other herald of the cross had come. Not only in 'Ephesus and throughout all Asia,' but also in Macedonia, Greece, Illyricum, Italy, and 'to the farthest bounds of the West,' did he gladly spend

himself in turning men from the service of dumb idols to the service of Him who had loved him and given Himself for him. The truth which he so zealously taught he at last sealed with his blood. In one region where his labours had been signally successful his work was continued by St. John, and with such increasingly favourable results that in the beginning of the following century the adherents of the new faith were there exceptionally numerous, and faithful even unto death.' Other evangelists carried the gospel to the regions of farther Syria and Mesopotamia. Egypt, if not also Ethiopia, stretched out her hands to God, and that great city, which was to prove a veritable Pharos of the Christian Church in early ages, joyously received the Gospel. So did Carthage as well as its old rival. But of the labours of the first missionaries of the cross, with the exception of three or four of the chief, tradition has preserved almost no authentic details. 'They were not,' as Farrar says, 'men of high commanding powers to make their names rise on all men's tongues, though they doubtless . . . did their work faithfully, and effected results of permanent value in founding and building up the Church. Still more they displayed before the world for the first time the then amazing spectacle and teaching of a Christian life. That we know so little of men who were such signal benefactors of their race is only what we have to lament in the cases of those to whom the world has owed most.' All we know is that they came and saw and conquered, that they confirmed the testimony of their lives by their martyr deaths, and that before the close of the century Christianity had given ample proof that its claim to be the universal

religion was no empty boast, and that it would soon and surely conquer the empire though the empire put forth all its might and bloody cruelty to crush it. It ever rose again and went on its triumphant way. Let me now briefly advert to its faith and life, its organisation, and its worship :—

I. The faith and life of the primitive Church.

Its divine Founder did not leave to His Church any scientific statement of doctrine. His inspired apostles did not draw up for it any minutely articulated creed, or exact of their young converts any detailed confession of their faith. The sole rudiments of a baptismal creed which can really be assigned to them were brief but comprehensive, embracing only faith in Christ, or in Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. The writings they left behind them were called forth by the practical necessities of the infant churches, and their main object was to tell of the glory of Christ, or to foster spiritual life, to warn against the practical dangers to which it was exposed, and against current or nascent forms of intellectual error which must prove hurtful to it. Yet, being divinely inspired, they were to prove not only a permanent directory in all that concerns salvation, but 'living seed-corn of knowledge,' which could not fail to unfold into a glorious harvest, as under the teaching of the Spirit the fulness of the truth they contained was discerned and appropriated in the ages that followed. The faith of those of whom Christ was the Master and His Spirit the guide in the earliest stage of the Church's history was simple in its elements and limited in its range, yet mighty in its influence. Primarily it was faith in Himself the God-man

Redeemer, yet virtually it included the whole circle of truth of which He was the centre. And as His resurrection from the dead was the completion, and, so to speak, the consecration of his Godlike life and atoning death, Christianity, whole and entire, was at times represented as involved in faith in that great truth (1 Cor. xv.). It was, as a living Swiss divine has said, 'the key-stone of the arch of Christian teaching and Christian living. From faith in the risen Christ sprung that marvellous outburst of the divine life which was so attractively exhibited by the members of the mother-church of Christendom.' No one of them deemed that he belonged any more to himself, but to Him who had died and risen, and revived, and become Lord of the dead and the living. All who experienced the power of that life recognised their oneness with each other as well as with Him who gave it. They had but one heart and one soul, they loved as brethren, and proved the intensity of their love by sharing their earthly goods with those who were in need. They afforded to those around the spectacle of an attachment so deep and tender that they could not withhold the tribute of their admiration. They nobly set themselves to gather in the poor, the outcast, the slave, and to raise woman to her rightful position. Every one of them became a veritable missionary, feeling that he could not but speak of the things which he had seen, and heard, and experienced, and so speak of them as to win others to Him for whom he had himself been gained.

The distinct knowledge of what was implied in such faith and self-surrender was not by any means developed all at once, nor was the development

attained, entirely purged from old habits of life and thought. But the more they came under the study of the Old Testament prophecies, and the guidance of the Spirit to comprehend the nature and offices of the Messiah, to realise Him as the Redeemer from sin, the fountain of life and of all good and holy influences, as well as a teacher sent from God and the King of the promised kingdom, they could not but grow in grace and holiness as they grew in the knowledge of Him. Gradually the errors and evil habits that clung to them were abandoned by those who loyally gave themselves up to be moulded by His teaching and guided by His Spirit, and gradually those who had not thus loyally given themselves up became offended and fell away. The Holy Spirit operated then just as in succeeding ages, Neander tells us, 'by the manifestation of the truth, not with a sudden transforming magical power. Hence in these first Christian societies (as in all later ones), although originating in so mighty an operation of the Spirit, foreign and spurious elements were mingled with the genuine. In fact, in proportion to the might and energy of the operation, many persons were more easily carried away by first impressions of divine truth whose hearts were not really changed and made a soil for the divine seed to take root in and develop itself. It happened then, as in the great religious revivals of later times, that many were for a time borne along by the force of excited feelings without having (as their subsequent conduct showed) their heart and inner being effectually penetrated and transformed by the Holy Spirit.' And so even in those days of first love, there were tares sown among

the good seed, false brethren who had neither part nor lot in Christ—like Simon Magus, the Nicolaitans, and the errorists of Galatia and Colosse; and the churches which a Paul planted and an Apollos watered, and a Peter or a John subsequently watched over, were still far from the full measure of the stature of Christ.

## II. The organisation of the primitive Church.

The Jewish people may be said to have had a two-fold religious organisation,—that which circled round the services of the temple at Jerusalem, and that which grew out of their felt need of religious instruction, and social worship in the several cities in which they dwelt. The former had been arranged to its minutest details by divine appointment, the latter had grown up without any such special appointment, and shaped itself freely. It was long a question keenly disputed among scholars, whether the Christian Church was modelled after the temple or the synagogue. But virtually that question may be regarded as now settled. The most competent scholars, British as well as German, are at last agreed that for the first two hundred years of its history, the idea that any order of ministers in the Christian Church was a priesthood was unknown. Neander, Ritschl, Whately, Stanley, Perowne, Jacobs, and Hatch,<sup>1</sup> are at one as to this, that neither in right of their own office nor as the delegates of their brethren, had its officers any priestly, but only ministerial, functions to perform. There was now, as Neander has said, 'the same High

<sup>1</sup> I refer particularly to what Whately has said in his *Cautions for the Times*, and Perowne in his able paper in the *Contemporary* for December 1878, a most seasonable antidote against the seductive theory of Bishop Moberly.

Priest and Mediator for all through whom all who become reconciled and united with God are themselves made a priestly and spiritual race . . . bound to make their life one continual priesthood, one spiritual worship, one unvarying testimony to their Saviour, as may be seen from 1 Peter ii. 9, Romans xii. 1, and the whole train of thought running through the Epistle to the Hebrews. So too, the advancement of God's kingdom in general and the diffusion of Christianity among the heathen in particular, was now to be not the duty of one select class, but the most immediate concern of each individual Christian.' A certain super-ordination and subordination of the members of the body, a certain guidance and direction in common concerns, was no doubt presupposed even by the different *charismata* imparted to them—some more directive, others more receptive. But it could hardly, he maintains, 'work itself out in a natural way from the essence of Christian life and of Christian fellowship, that this guidance should be intrusted absolutely to one individual, while the Church remained true to the original spirit of Christianity,—the spirit of brotherhood in Christ, the consciousness of mutual dependence. How difficult to find in the young communities a single individual uniting in himself all the qualifications required for guiding the affairs of the body; how much easier to find in every community several fathers of families whose peculiarities together might supply the deficiencies of each as an individual, one of whom might enjoy the most confidence in this and another in that class of the community, and who together might be qualified for this function.' This, which



Neander pronounces to be the more easy and natural course, was also that which their Lord's example in the choice of the twelve would specially incline them to prefer. It was the course too which had been followed by their countrymen in regulating their synagogues. These, though, so far as we know, they had grown up without any express divine sanction, could not fail to commend themselves to a community having the same religious wants, and ever ready for the supply of them to avail itself of existing forms which were really suitable to its wants.

It was a received principle among the Jews that wherever there were ten men of learning and leisure in the community, *there* there ought to be a synagogue for the worship of God, for the study of His holy Word, and the maintenance of a holy discipline. Even where there were not so many as ten such men the people were not at liberty to neglect the assembling of themselves together, but were bound to have a *προσευχή*, or oratory, though, like that of the little Jewish colony at Philippi, it were but a rude enclosure without a roof to shelter the worshippers from the rain and cold. They were accustomed to assemble in their synagogues not only on the Sabbaths but on certain week-days also. The exact constitution of these synagogues in the time of our Lord has not even yet perhaps been thoroughly expiscated. But certain great facts concerning them are now almost universally acknowledged. One which cannot be gainsaid is, that as a rule they were under the government of a committee or council of *Zekenim*, *πρεσβύτεροι*, or elders, just as the administration of the civil affairs of the community, so far as it was left to

be regulated by their own customs, was intrusted to the same or to an analogous council, and a certain superintendence of all to the council of elders at Jerusalem, known as the Sanhedrim or Great Synagogue. Buxtorf, Vitringa, Lightfoot, Jahn, and others who have more recently written on the antiquities of the Jews, are in this at one with Neander, Lechler, Köstlin, and other recent Church historians. In these circumstances it was, as Bishop Lightfoot says, 'not unnatural that when the Christian synagogue took its place by the side of the Jewish, a similar organisation should be adopted.' The very name of synagogue was retained among the Jewish Christians,<sup>1</sup> and it is supposed that at times whole synagogues with their existing staff of governors passed over into the Church. Without any formal account of their origin, presbyters, and apparently a plurality of them, are early found discharging in Judeo-Christian churches duties analogous to those discharged by the same order in the synagogue. Those who in Acts v. 6 and 10 are termed *νεώτεροι* and *νεανίσκοι*, are supposed by many to correspond with the inferior ministers of the synagogue, and by some with the later deacons. Others suppose that the *διάκονος* was a new officer who had no exact representative in the synagogue. It has long been the received opinion that Acts vi. records the institution of the office of deacon, but the seven are not expressly called by that name; and one of the most learned and liberal Roman Catholics in our own day, as well as one of the most learned German Protestants, has maintained that we have in that chapter the institution of the

<sup>1</sup> It is used once in the New Testament (James ii. 2) in this sense.

office of presbyter, not of that of deacon. It is certainly remarkable, as they have pointed out, that the first specific notice of presbyters we meet with in the Acts of the Apostles represents them as having, among other duties, the charge of the charitable contributions for the support of the poorer members in the very church in which the seven had been appointed to that office. Thus in Acts xi. 29, 30, we read that the disciples in Antioch, 'every man according to his ability, determined to send relief to the brethren which dwelt in Judea, which also they did, and sent it to the elders (πρὸς τοὺς πρεσβυτέρους) by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.' When these delegates had fulfilled this mission, they returned to Antioch, and being there set apart, under the direction of the Spirit, for special evangelistic service, they started on their first missionary journey, towards the close of which we are informed (Acts xiv. 23) that they ordained presbyters in every church. After that date it admits of no doubt that the individual Christian congregations among the Gentiles as well as among the Jews were, as a rule, intrusted to the charge of a council of presbyters. In the mother church at Jerusalem these presbyters held their place side by side with the Apostles themselves, being joined with them in the session of the first Christian council, and in the decrees it issued, and in the letter with which it accompanied its decrees. At a considerably later date we find them assembled with James, their president, to receive St. Paul after his third missionary tour, to hear of the success of his labours, and to tell of their own. 'It is they who govern and manage the entire church life.' (Uhlhorn.)

Besides the name of *πρεσβύτεροι*, several other terms having relation to their chief duties are employed at times to designate these officials. They are *ποίμενες*, shepherds, who tend and guide the flock of Christ ; *ἡγούμενοι* and *προεστώτες*, who lead and preside over it ; and finally, when Christian congregations come to be formed among the Gentiles, *ἐπίσκοποι*. This name, Neander tells us, was 'borrowed from the city form of government among the Greeks.' It was given to various officials who were generally delegates or responsible to others, as those sent by the Athenians to a colony or conquered city. Dr. Hatch has clearly proved that it was often 'applied not only to permanent or quasi-permanent officers, but also to the governing body or a committee' of that body, in private associations as well as in municipalities in Asia Minor and in Syria. Ancient inscriptions show that it was at times applied to the officers of a heathen temple. It is used in the Septuagint to designate Jewish officers both civil and religious.

That thus originally the *ἐπίσκοπος* in the Christian Church was identical with the *πρεσβύτερος* may be said to be now all but universally conceded. The Scripture proof of this, in fact, is irresistible, for (1.) Both designations are used interchangeably, as in Acts xx. 17 and 28, where St. Paul is said to call together the elders (*τοὺς πρεσβυτέρους*) of Ephesus, and to address them, 'Take heed unto yourselves and to all the flock among which the Holy Ghost hath made you bishops (*ἐπισκόπους*);' and again in Titus i. 5 and 7, where St. Paul, reminding Titus that he had left him in Crete 'to ordain presbyters in every city, if any be blameless,' etc., goes on to say, 'for a bishop must be

blameless.' (2.) This is also the natural conclusion from those passages in the New Testament where the name of deacon is introduced immediately after that of bishop as apparently constituting along with it a complete enumeration of the officers of the Church, as in Philippians i. 1, where St. Paul addresses himself to all the saints which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons, speaking of bishops as well as deacons in the plural, and making no mention of an intermediate order, and again in 1 Timothy iii., where the Apostle gives directions about the qualifications to be required in bishops and deacons only, though elsewhere in the Epistle he refers to presbyters and the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. It is worthy of note that the old Syriac translation of this chapter substituted for the words 'if a man desireth the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work,' etc., the words 'if a man desireth the presbyterate he desireth a good work; a presbyter then must be blameless' (just as it does in Titus i. 7), and as in Philippians i. 1 it reads for bishops and deacons, presbyters and deacons. This interchange of the two names clearly shows that at the time the Syriac translation was formed it was held by that venerable church that these two words in the Pastoral Epistles denoted but one and the same officer. (3.) That the *πρεσβύτερος* in apostolic times was in no respect inferior to the *ἐπίσκοπος* is further evident from the fact that the Apostles themselves assume that name, as St. John in his 2d and 3d Epistles, or speak of themselves as co-presbyters, as St. Peter, in the 5th chapter of his 1st Epistle. There he not only identifies himself with the presbyters, but according to the

received text identifies them with the bishops : 'The presbyters which are among you I exhort, who am a co-presbyter and a witness of the sufferings of Christ . . . feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof (*ἐπισκοποῦντες*, acting as its bishops), not by constraint, but willingly.'

A similar conclusion to that we deem ourselves warranted to draw from Scripture may be deduced from the earliest work of an apostolic father of which we can be sure that it has descended to us substantially free from later interpolations. Clement of Rome, in the Epistle which he wrote in name of the Roman to the Corinthian Church, mentions together bishops and deacons, and seems to know of no other officers set over the Church by the Apostles. 'The Apostles,' he says (c. 42), 'preaching everywhere through countries and cities appointed their first-fruits, when they had proved them by the Spirit, to be bishops and deacons unto them that should believe, and this they did in no new fashion ; for indeed it had been written concerning bishops and deacons from very ancient times ; for thus saith the Scripture in a certain place, 'I will appoint their bishops in righteousness and their deacons in faith.' I am not concerned to vindicate the peculiar interpretation of this prophecy of Isaiah (lx. 17) given by others besides Clement ; I simply call attention to the fact that the only two orders of office-bearers which he regards as promised to the Church in prophecy, and actually bestowed on it by the Apostles, were bishops and deacons. Further, in some parts of his Epistle he appears positively to identify bishops with presbyters. That, according to Lightfoot, is the

last instance of such an identification, but according to Ritschl and Uhlhorn a considerably later one is found in the *Shepherd* of Hermas, a member of the Roman Church, shortly before the middle of the second century. The Church of Philippi at the time Polycarp addressed to it his Epistle, seems only to have had presbyters and deacons as its officers. Presbyters also are the highest office-bearers named in that homily which has long passed as the Second Epistle of Clement, and which probably came from within the Roman or the Corinthian Church about the middle of the same century. Nay, the same identification seems to be made in one place even by a later father, as Dr. Hatch admits. No doubt by the time of Irenaeus, one of the presbyters had generally come to be *primus inter pares*, or something more. Yet he at times uses the old word presbyter where later writers would employ episcopus, and approaches as near as possible to the primitive identification of the offices in the passage where he says, 'Tales enim *presbyteros* nutrit ecclesia de quibus et propheta ait, Et dabo principes tuos in pace et *episcopos* tuos in justitia.'<sup>1</sup> Before the time of Irenaeus, however, that affectation of a different name for the president of the presbyterial council, begun at an earlier time in the East, had generally extended to the West, and the title of episcopus been limited to the president of the presbyters,—the teacher of the

<sup>1</sup> It would lead me beyond my province to carry down the proof farther, but I may state that Hilary the deacon, Jerome, Augustine, Chrysostom, and a host of later writers, show a consciousness of the original identity. In the sixteenth century the opinion that the presbyterate was the highest order, and bishops, archbishops, and patriarchs but grades in it, still found advocates in the old Church.

church, the leader of its worship, and the administrator of its charities. Still, at this stage, he was but the pastor of a single flock, or of the Christians of a single city, the superintendent of a *παρoικία*, not a *διοίκησις*, and may be said to be more nearly reproduced in the pastor of a Scottish parish with his staff of elders and deacons, than in any modern prelate with his diocēsan clergy—in the pastor of this church, for instance, rather than in any one claiming to be either Bishop or Archbishop of Edinburgh. That was all the development a threefold ministry had attained half a century after the death of St. John—all the development implied in those Ignatian Epistles as to the genuineness and exact date of which there is still so much dubiety and perplexity. While that is admitted, it matters little, I think, whether one holds with Lightfoot that such an amount of difference began before the death of St. John, and with his sanction, or with Dr. Hatch that it was the result of natural arrangement during the earlier half of the second century. If, as both these scholars admit, even this amount of development did not take place till towards the middle of the century in several of the apostolic churches, and notably in the Church of Rome, from which so many others received their orders, then the bishops had nothing to give but what they had originally received from presbyters, and what, therefore, presbyters must be competent to give still in any church which prefers the freer less centralising arrangements of earlier times. They may be warranted to defend as lawful or expedient earlier and even later developments of episcopal power, but not, as they admit, to un-



church others who do not adopt them. Or as it had been more broadly, and I humbly think more truly put years before by Riddle in the preface to his *Manual of Christian Antiquities*, 'Perhaps we fall very short of a due degree of charity and candour unless we are ready to forego any exclusive claims or pretensions in our own favour. We may reasonably believe that episcopacy is a divine institution, but we have no right to contend that it is the only system to which that honour is attached.' 'It may be as easy to prove the early existence and present lawfulness of a presbyterian constitution (for instance) as to establish the same points in favour of an episcopal establishment. And as it may be wise and useful to adopt the primitive episcopal model in one age or country, so it may be equally wise and useful to adopt the primitive presbyterian model in another.' An old-fashioned Scotchman may claim to hold that it is even more easy to prove the early existence of a presbyterian constitution in several of the apostolic churches than to establish the same fact for an episcopal one, and to hint that the church of his fathers has got on very comfortably and creditably under it, and been able to educate and train the nation intrusted to it as faithfully and well as the church of any other land. Yet, even such an one will not refuse the tribute so well deserved by him who has had the courage to give utterance to these manly words, or to augur a brighter future for all the Protestant churches of Britain when such sentiments of generous toleration and mutual respect shall be more widely cherished and acted on by their ministers and members.

## III. The worship of the primitive Church.

The worship of the early Church, like its organisation, was confessedly modelled on that of the Jewish synagogue. In fact distinguished ministers of the sister Church have not hesitated to say it was identical with it save in the new truths which Christianity implied and the new *charismata* which it imparted. The Ecclesia, as another has said, was the synagogue, but the synagogue on fire with a new ardour and life. The services of the synagogue were partly didactic and partly devotional. Every synagogue was bound to have a roll of the Torah or Pentateuch, and before the time of our Lord one of the prophets also. The Pentateuch was divided into a certain number of sections, so that the whole might be read over in a year, or some other definite time. Along with the five books of Moses there were also read extracts from the prophets. When the passages had been read in the original, as they continued to be in non-Hellenistic synagogues, they were interpreted or paraphrased in the vernacular, and, when there was any more formal discourse, it was delivered immediately after. These usages of the synagogue appear to have passed at once into the Christian Church, especially the Jewish section of it. After the rise of the New Testament literature, the Christian Churches naturally added to the reading of the Law and the Prophets the reading of the Gospels and Apostolic Letters, or they substituted that in place of the other. Most of the Apostolic Epistles were addressed not to individuals but to a church or group of churches, and could only be made generally known by being read in their assemblies. Some of them

were expressly directed to be so read, and such stated public reading was absolutely necessary to make Christians familiar with the Scriptures when many could not read, and when manuscripts were rare, and by their high price beyond the reach of many. The Old Testament was read first in the Christian assemblies, especially those parts of the prophecies which referred to the offices and work of the Messiah, then the Gospels which recorded the fulfilment in Jesus of those things which Moses and the prophets had foretold, and last of all the Epistles of the Apostles. An exposition or discourse followed after the reading of the Scriptures. It was generally founded on or suggested by the passages which had been read, and was a simple address of a hortatory nature such as the heart of the speaker might prompt when warmed by the remembrance of the precious truths suggested by the incidents of our Lord's life, or sufferings, or teaching, which came home to the hearts of the first converts with a freshness and power which we in later times can but faintly realise. The discourse, Dr. Schaff says, was mainly in the shape of a missionary or revival address, 'designed to kindle life and raise up new converts, a simple historical testimony respecting the crucified and risen Saviour of the world. It was altogether practical, yet not without the profound thought which meditation on these great truths was fitted to awaken, . . . clear and deliberate yet borne along on the wings of a holy enthusiasm.' This was especially the case with the prophesyings or the awakening and consolatory discourses of the *προφήται*, as distinguished from those of the *διδάσκαλοι*. In those

days of special gifts preaching stood free to all, but it was generally the work of apostle or evangelist or 'teacher' or 'prophet,' and very soon became that of the presiding presbyter or bishop, or of some one specially appointed by him. The discourses are generally supposed neither to have been written nor committed to memory in early times, but what was long regarded as the 2d Epistle of Clement is now by the recovery of the missing portion shown to be a homily which was written and read in some church probably before the middle of the second century.

The other parts of the synagogue worship which passed over into the Christian Church were the services of praise and prayer. The chief hymn-book, in fact I may say the chief prayer-book, of the Jewish Church was the Book of Psalms. This inspired collection of prayers and sacred songs appears before the time of our Lord to have been arranged into certain divisions adapted to the principal Jewish festivals and hours of prayer. It could not fail that such a repertory of devotion, the contents of which still touch and stir responsively the hearts of all deeply earnest men, should be at once appropriated by the Christian Church, which had been taught by her risen Lord to discern in it the things concerning His sufferings, and the glory which should follow. Neither could there fail to spring up in an age so rich in spiritual gifts more distinctively Christian hymns—'like flowers beneath the vernal sun.' 'Several sections of the Gospel of St. Luke, which in its first two chapters is highly poetical, even in the first century, probably passed into use' as hymns or doxologies—the anthem of the heavenly host, who appeared to the

shepherds, and that of the rejoicing multitudes who attended our Lord at His triumphal entry into the holy city, as well as the songs of the Virgin Mary and Zacharias and Simeon. The thanksgiving or prayer recorded in Acts iv. 21-30 has a rhythmical character, and may without much difficulty be arranged in parallelisms like the psalms and hymns just named. The Apostolic Epistles are also supposed to contain various fragments of Christian hymns or doxologies. Ephesians v. 14, which some have tortured to identify it with one or another passage of the Old Testament, is stated by Theodoret to be taken from a Christian hymn. The like has been asserted of 2 Timothy ii. 11-13, and even of that famous passage, 1 Timothy iii. 16, where the hypothesis of its being a quotation from an early Christian hymn has been adduced as the real explanation of the difficult reading *ὃς*, which is now generally accepted as the true one. The Book of Revelation is also supposed to embody various hymns and doxologies which, if not taken from previously existing collections, could not fail to be added to them as soon as that mysterious book was given to the Churches. Indeed, some in our own country, as well as in Germany, hold that the book is more realistic than is commonly supposed, and that there mingle with its visions of the heavenly sanctuary the echoes of those strains which its author had learned from the temple or the synagogue—possibly had begun to mould into shape for the highest act of worship in the sanctuary below—and that in its doxologies to Him that was slain and hath redeemed us to God by His blood, and made us kings and priests to Him, we have the prototype of that *carmen Christo quasi*

*Deo* of which Pliny, soon after the commencement of the next century, makes mention. That is the earliest post-biblical notice of the service of praise in the Church, though some question whether the reference is to the ascription of praise in song or in responsive prayer. Justin Martyr and Tertullian bear testimony to the use of hymns in the Church in the second century, and Origen and Caius in the third, and they further tell us that these hymns offered praise to Christ as the Word of God, and 'ascribed Divinity to Him.' Faith in Christ and devotion to Him as the Incarnate Word were expressed in the Church's worship before they were embodied in a scientifically developed creed. One of the most ancient hymns that has come down to us is that found in the *Pedagogue* of Clement of Alexandria, but supposed to have originated even before his time. It contains figurative forms of expression which were familiar to the Church in early days, and shows us 'the heart of primitive piety labouring to give utterance to its emotions' of adoring wonder, love, and gratitude, in view of the offices and character of its Divine Redeemer. Several translations and paraphrases of it have been made in our own day. One of the best is that given in Dr. Schaff's *Christ in Song*—a collection in our own language of all the finest hymns which have been composed in various tongues and used in various ages of the Church's eventful history. The *Gloria in Excelsis*, the Greek original of which dates probably from the third century, was a morning hymn or doxology of the ancient Church. The evening one in the *Apostolical Constitutions* is as ancient, if indeed it does not reach back into the second century.

It now only remains that I should speak of the service of prayer, which from the first had been reckoned the very soul of Christian worship as of Christian life, and deemed by ancient fathers, as by modern poets, to be the 'Christian's vital breath, the Christian's native air,' not less necessary for the individual believer than for the whole Church for maintaining communion with the Divine Head, fitting her to do His work in the world, and keeping brightly burning the flame of Christian love which at once provides and consumes on the altar of a holy heart the only sacrifice now well-pleasing to God. It was bound on the Christian by the strongest motives—gratitude to his God and Saviour, and the deep sense of his own need. It was consecrated by the example of Him who, though without sin and one with the eternal Father in the days of His flesh, 'offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears,' as well as by the example of those He left behind Him in the world, who 'continuing with one accord in prayer and supplication,' obtained promised blessings, the precious fruits of which have extended to the Church of all subsequent ages. From the first the Christians, like the Jews, had their special hours of prayer. At evening, morning, and noontide they sought communion with God, yea, like the Psalmist, many of them soon came to engage seven times a day in this sacred exercise. The most illustrious Christian teachers wrote on the subject of prayer, and showed a true estimate of its nature, necessity, and value. Tertullian speaks of it—no doubt including in it adoration and thanksgiving—as the spiritual sacrifice which has superseded the offerings of the ancient

ritual. 'We,' he says, 'are the true worshippers and the true priests who pray in the spirit, and thus offer the sacrifice which is befitting God's nature, and well-pleasing in his sight. And what is there which the God who seeks this prayer can withhold from it?' Then, after adducing various examples of its efficacy both in securing deliverance from suffering and in strengthening to bear it when miraculous deliverance was not vouchsafed, he proceeds, 'Now the prayer of righteousness averts the Divine wrath, . . . it washes away sins, repels temptations, extinguishes persecutions, comforts the feeble-minded, delights the magnanimous, . . . raises the fallen, props the falling, and preserves the standing.' Origen, the greatest of early Christian scholars, vindicates the place and power of prayer to the Christian almost like one of our own later divines. Against certain proud theosophists, not yet extinct, who profess to despise it as a mark of weakness, he says, 'How much would each among us have to recount of the efficacy of prayer if only he were thankfully to recall God's mercies! . . . Souls which have been long unfruitful becoming conscious of their state and fructified by the Holy Spirit in answer to persevering prayer, have given forth words of salvation full of intuitions of truth. . . . The power also of bewildering arguments which might stagger many who are accounted believers has been often vanquished by him who put trust in prayer.' In another place he speaks of prayer as the key which unlocks the treasury of the divine mysteries, and affirms that nothing is more necessary than prayer for the right understanding of divine things. Prayer, according to Clement, his predecessor, is in truth 'life



with God.' Wherever the Christian may be, and however occupied, he may pray without ceasing, and rest assured that the most passing ejaculation, the most inarticulate cry, will not be unnoticed by Him who knows afar off the wish of the heart that is yearning after Him.

In idea the whole life of the Christian should be consecrated to his Lord, and every word and act be the spontaneous expression of the deep earnest feeling within. But, even so, special seasons of communion with God are needed to fan the flame of devotion and strengthen and intensify the inner life. The Christians of the mother Church, copying the example of their former co-religionists in the Holy City, were at first accustomed to meet every day for social worship. But with this they united from the first the consecration of one day in the week for special religious exercises. The Jewish Christians, who clung to the forms of the temple and synagogue we know, continued to observe the Jewish Sabbath and festivals at least till the destruction of Jerusalem ; but along therewith they observed also, like their Gentile brethren, the first day of the week in memory of the resurrection of their Lord. They believed that He meant to consecrate it, when He appeared to them, not only on the day itself, but on the eighth day after, and on the fiftieth day—also the first day of the week—bestowed His Holy Spirit on them. It was early designated as the Lord's Day just as the holy supper was called His, and as the Jewish Sabbath had been claimed by Jehovah as His 'holy day.' And I cannot persuade myself that it was other than a true instinct which ultimately led so many mediæval

as well as later divines to claim a sanction for a recurring day of holy rest and special religious service in the principle of the fourth commandment, and even in the Mosaic account of the creation.

The earliest description we have of the services of the Lord's Day is the brief but significant one incidentally given in the celebrated letter of Pliny to the Emperor Trajan, which was written about the year 110. 'The Christians,' he tells us, 'assembled on a stated day at sunrise, sang responsively a hymn to Christ as God, and then pledged themselves by an oath (*sacramento*) not to any evil work, but that they would commit no theft, robbery, nor adultery, would not break their word nor withhold property intrusted to them. Afterwards they assembled again to eat in common an ordinary and innocent meal.' This we cannot doubt was the *agapæ* originally observed in connection with the Lord's Supper, but now or soon to be disjoined from it. Thirty or forty years later we have a more detailed account of the worship of the Lord's Day in the larger Apology of Justin Martyr, and as, with the exception of the recently recovered fragment of the first Epistle of Clement, it is the earliest notice of that worship from a Christian source, I subjoin it in Bishop Kaye's translation :—

'And on that day called Sunday there is an assembling together of all who dwell in the cities and country, and the Memoirs of the apostles and the writings of the prophets are read as long as circumstances will permit. Then, when the reader has ceased, the president delivers a discourse in which he admonishes and exhorts all present to the imitation of these good things. Then we all rise together and

pray, and as we before said, prayer being ended, bread and wine and water are brought, and the president offers prayer in like manner and thanksgivings according to his ability, and the people express their assent by saying Amen, and the distribution of that over which the thanksgiving has been pronounced takes place to each, and each partakes, and a portion is sent to the absent by the deacons. And they who are wealthy and choose, give as much as they respectively deem fit, and whatever is collected is deposited with the president, who succours the orphans and widows and those who through sickness or any other cause are in want, and those who are in bonds, and the strangers sojourning among us, and, in a word, takes care of all who are in need.' According to this statement the meeting on the Sunday for worship had already become the principal one which all professing Christians were expected to attend. The service began with the reading of the sacred books, though possibly this may have been preceded by some brief invocation of God's presence and blessing, and followed by the singing of a hymn or chanting a portion of the Psalms. The reading was from the memoirs of the Apostles, by which are probably meant the historical books of the New Testament, and from the prophetical writings of the Old Testament, and it was performed by a reader. After this followed the preaching, which, now that extraordinary spiritual gifts had become more rare, was usually devolved on the presiding presbyter or bishop, and was generally an exposition or application of some part of the lessons read. To the preaching succeeded prayers and intercessions for kings and for all in authority, also for enemies, and persecutors, as well as

for the persecuted and oppressed, and for Christians of all estates and degrees, that all needful grace might be given them, and, in a word, for all men that they might come to the knowledge of the truth and be saved. The attitude of the worshippers during prayer was that of standing, at least on Sundays, as it is still in the Eastern Church. After this followed the communion service—the centre and crown of their worship on the Lord's Day, though not yet surrounded with such mystery or celebrated with such pomp as in later times. This service began with the presentation of offerings by the worshippers as they were able and willing—the elements to be used in the communion being included among these offerings. Next thanks were given to God for all His gifts in providence and grace, and above all for His greatest and best gift, and all the blessings that come to men through Him. Made partakers of these blessings they offered up to Him the holy and living sacrifice which alone He desires and accepts, the sacrifice of their redeemed natures, and gave themselves up in holy surrender to Him. The elements were then distributed among the communicants, and a portion was sent by the deacons to those who were absent, and probably the services were concluded with a brief doxology or blessing. Justin also gives an account of that sacrament which was at once the seal of God's renewing grace and of the Christian's lifelong vow.

This remarkable passage naturally suggests the inquiry, Were the prayers of the early Christians wholly or partially free, or were they already rigidly fixed? It is hard to persuade one's-self that those early Christians who were so filled with the spirit of

love and power, and endued with such special gifts of knowledge and utterance as to be often impelled to speak in the assemblies of the faithful, and even to speak at times in rhythmical form, would be entirely mute in prayer, or restricted to repeating mechanically what they had before them in a book, or had learned by rote. No, they prayed in the spirit as well as 'prophesied' in the spirit. The Lord's Prayer, no doubt, was used from the first, and some other brief Scripture forms. But we have stronger evidence that these first Christians poured forth the free effusions of their heart, suited to the circumstances and occasions, than we have that they also used stated forms. 'We cannot suppose that when St. Paul knelt down with the elders of Ephesus on the shore at Miletus, and commended them and their work to God, he prayed from a book, or according to a fixed form, any more than that he read the solemn charge which he had just before addressed to them as a modern bishop would.' Unquestionably he gave vent to the deep warm feelings of his heart in simple and appropriate words on that and similar occasions, and, unquestionably, his example would be followed by those associated with him. Nothing more suggestive of the original freedom can well be imagined than the injunctions the Apostle gives in 1 Cor. xiv. Nor can we suppose that men who thought and wrote of prayer, as Clement, Tertullian, and Origen did, were unaccustomed in private or altogether restrained in public from pouring out the free utterances of their heart to the Hearer and Answerer of prayer. Tertullian says that Christians prayed '*de pectore*,' '*sine monitore*,' and '*de proprio ingenio*;' and Origen, that they did so

closing the eyes of sense. If the services of the Church in their day were already stiffening down into the mechanical form they ultimately assumed, room was still left for free prayer. Even Bingham says that in the primitive times every bishop (*i.e.* virtually every pastor) had the right to frame his own liturgy, provided he observed the analogy of faith. The recently recovered prayer of Clement I take to be an exemplification of this right, and all the more valuable in that, though proceeding from so honoured a father, it never, as a whole, came into general use.<sup>1</sup> Justin says that the president offered prayers and thanksgiving *ὅση δύναμις αὐτῷ*—‘to the best of his ability.’ Notwithstanding the laboured attempt of Bingham and others to put another meaning on these words, I hold that Lord King’s argument<sup>2</sup> is yet unshaken, and that if regard is had to the use of similar phrases in nearly contemporary Christian authors, the words must be held to assert for the president such a liberty in worship, and include his readiness and felicity of expression, as well as his ardour of spirit. ‘The prayers,’ King says, ‘which made up a great part of their service were not imposed forms, but free prayers, the words and expressions of which were left to the prudence, choice, and judgment of every bishop or minister.’ ‘While they did follow a certain method, every one who officiated delivered himself in such terms as best

<sup>1</sup> Single petitions and a group or two of them did so, but not slavishly in the same order or words.

<sup>2</sup> See this as given at length in the appendix to Riddle’s *Manual of Christian Antiquities*; Fisher, Lightfoot, and De Pressensé admit its force; and it is clearly borne out by the Egyptian Constitutions of the third century, *πᾶς κατὰ τὴν δύναμιν αὐτοῦ προσευχέσθω*, etc. (Bk. ii. c. 34.)—*Bunsen*, vi. 462. Forms were not yet made obligatory.

### 36 *The Apostolic and Sub-Apostolic Church.*

pleased him, and varied his petitions according to varying circumstances and emergencies.' Thus you see that our own church, which in her Directory for public worship has prescribed a general method and order of service while leaving her ministers free to make use of such words as seem to themselves most appropriate, and to vary their petitions, 'according to varying circumstances and emergencies,' has not in the opinion of unbiassed students of Christian antiquity acted altogether without warrant from the practice of primitive times, and that the Reformed or Calvinistic churches on the Continent, which while adopting partial liturgies have generally also made provision for free prayer, have in this, as in some other respects, shown themselves to be not extreme, but moderate reformers, content with the least possible amount of change which could bring them into substantial harmony with the freer, more flexible, and living Christianity of the earliest age. Whatever may be affirmed about this matter on grounds of expediency and natural fitness (and a good deal may be said on such grounds on both sides of the question), no one who is disposed to allow much weight to primitive usage in determining his opinion and practice can venture to cast a stone at them. Such was primitive Christianity—the enthusiasm of humanity, but kindled by union with its living Head.

*Authorities Consulted.*—Neander, Gieseler, Hagenbach, Guerické, and Schaff's Church Histories, Schaff's *Apostolic Church*, Ritschl's *Alt-katholische Kirche*, Lechler's *Apostolische und Nachapostolische Zeitalter*, Vitringa, Coleman, Riddle, Jacobs, Hatch, Palmer, Fisher, Stanley's *Christian Institutions*, Lightfoot on *Philippians*, *Colossians*, and *St. Clement of Rome*, Gebhart, Harnack and Zahn's *Patrum Apostolicorum Opera*.



# ST. GILES' LECTURES.

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*FOURTH SERIES—THE CHURCHES OF CHRISTENDOM.*

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## *LECTURE II.*

### THE CHURCH OF THE SECOND AND THIRD CENTURIES.

By the REV. WILLIAM MILLIGAN, D.D., Professor of Biblical Criticism  
in the University of Aberdeen.

WITH the close of the first century the last of the Apostles had been gathered to his rest, and the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ entered upon a new period of her existence. No transition so momentous has taken place at any other period of her progress, and the question as to the manner in which it was effected has been described by the late Dean of Westminster as the greatest that Ecclesiastical History has to answer. To be deprived, while yet it may be said in her infancy, of the presence of those who had been the immediate disciples of the Lord, and who had been expressly trained by Him for the advancement of His kingdom,—to be left



without that authoritative guidance upon which, as appears from the records of the first century, she had hitherto relied with so much simplicity and confidence of faith,—and to be compelled to solve for herself the innumerable problems meeting her in every aspect alike of her internal economy and her relation to the world,—the task involved in all this was far more trying to the Church than we, after centuries of Christian experience, are well able to imagine. Were it not that it strikingly illustrates the whole character of the Christian Dispensation, it might well seem strange to us that such a task should have been imposed upon her. Yet she successfully accomplished it ; and, before the close of the third century, she had risen to a distinct consciousness both of herself and of her work ; had prevailed over opposition without and dissension within ; and was prepared for the great change which, in the beginning of the fourth century, opened out to her a new era of existence, that, in some of its most characteristic features, has continued to the present hour.

To trace in a single lecture with anything like minuteness of detail the history of the Church through two of the most eventful centuries of her life is of course impossible. I must simply endeavour to catch some of the leading characteristics of the period, so that we may better understand her, as, through the strange and mingled elements of the time, she began to know herself and to realise and execute her mission.

In doing so, we are not to imagine that we have to deal with a condition of mental or spiritual torpor. We mistake the character of the age when we think of it as exhibiting a slumber like that which

we generally associate with the middle age of Christian history, as languidly resting on the traditions of the past, and as stirred by no urgent questions bearing on its own immediate present. So far was this from being the case, that there has probably never been a time when in all those countries which formed the central stage of the world's action, there was more restlessness of spirit, more eager inquiry upon every important topic of human interest, more daring speculation, or less hesitation in pursuing to their remotest practical consequences the opinions and beliefs which had been reached. The new ideas introduced into the world by our Lord and His Apostles had now travelled far beyond the bounds of Palestine, and had penetrated Syria, Greece, Italy, Spain, the southern parts of Gaul, Egypt, and Proconsular Africa. Taking advantage of the way opened up by the conquests of Alexander the Great, they had even reached Mesopotamia, Arabia, and India ; while they had nowhere made a more powerful home for themselves than in that district of Asia Minor, with its large and flourishing cities, where the East and the West met together and mingled, often in the most fantastic combinations, their streams of thought. These ideas, in this respect differing from all previous systems of religion, found everywhere a point of contact with man. Wherever they came they acted like leaven in meal. The whole mass was thrown into agitation. How much of the new doctrine was to be received ? How much of the old beliefs must perish ? How far could the one be adapted to the other ? And what was to be the effect on life in all its aspects, individual, social, civil,

religious, for this world, and for the next? Questions like these forced themselves not only on philosophers and schools, but upon the community at large; and herein lay the main element of their power. Great transitions can never be brought about by a few thinkers in their closets. The thinkers must prepare the way. Without them little can be done, but by them alone as little. The mass must be moved. It was so at the Reformation. It is so again in the state of transition through which we are passing, and the greatness of which we are as yet unable to estimate. Not less was it so in the second and third centuries. There was a heaving in the minds of men. The young fresh religion of Jesus had appeared in the midst of a decaying, dying world; and only as itself not dying, but in the full vigour of life, could it take possession of the field.

All the records of the age illustrate the mental activity to which I have referred. The number of writers mentioned by Eusebius as having flourished at the time far exceeds what we should have imagined to be possible. These writers also were frequently men of the highest culture, of great speculative power, of wide reading, of extensive knowledge gained from travel as well as books, of acuteness in reasoning, and of unrivalled eloquence in the expression of their thoughts. The names of Justin Martyr, Dionysius of Corinth, Irenæus, Hippolytus, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, and Cyprian, would alone redeem any two centuries from the charge of barrenness; while the life and labours of Origen shed lustre, not merely upon his own age, but upon the whole history of the Christian Church. Even the many

whose names alone are known to us were highly valued in their day, and their works were carefully preserved by the brethren for generations after their death.<sup>1</sup> It may be true that education was not so general then as it is now, and that the number of readers must have been proportionally small. This, however, was largely compensated for by the practice of reading aloud in the congregation, not only the sacred books, but the treatises and letters of distinguished Fathers of the Church. The whole body of the Christian community was thus everywhere kept alive. Widely separated churches then knew far better what was passing in each other's midst than they know at present; and ever and again the written communications were quickened by the living voice. Bishops and leading men were fond of travel; and, whenever upon their journeys they visited a church, they were in the habit of conferring, either with it or with its representatives, on points respecting the common faith. Not a few instances of this kind, beautifully illustrative of the brotherly sympathy and affection springing from the sense of union in one Lord, and from the desire to edify one another in Him, are related by Eusebius. Add to all this the degree to which Christians were everywhere engaged in controversy,—sometimes with heretical sects within the Church, more frequently with outside parties which, in their desire to combine leading truths of Christianity with their own philosophical notions, mutilated or destroyed them,—and we shall see how far wrong we are in thinking that we have to deal with men who had neither great questions before their

<sup>1</sup> Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* iv.

minds, nor aptitude to bring them to a settlement ; who were without convictions of their own, and who thus became the easy prey of ambitious ecclesiastics. Both the second and third centuries rang with the efforts of sects, at the head of which stood voluminous writers against whom it was absolutely necessary to contend, because they not only perverted the meaning of Scripture, but resorted to what Irenæus calls 'an unspeakable number of apocryphal and spurious writings.'<sup>1</sup> Inquiry was thus excited ; historical investigation was promoted ; critical skill was cultivated ; powers of reasoning were sharpened ; capability of forming a judgment was matured. During this period of the Church's history we are in the midst of no ignorant, superstitious, and credulous age : everything testifies to the contrary.

With the outward progress of the Church during the period before us I shall not detain you. I turn rather to the internal development of that Divine Institution which was then, and has ever since been, so powerful a factor in the history of the world.

The second and third centuries of the Christian era are in the main a time of the consolidation of the Church ; and they invite us especially to mark her as she defends herself against her enemies, settles the details of her constitution and government, addresses herself to the development of her theology, determines the leading features of her worship, and unfolds her spiritual life.

1. In the first place, we see the Church *vindicating her position before the world*. The age was in an eminent degree one of apology. Attacked on every

<sup>1</sup> *Adv. Har.*, i. 20.

side both by Jews and Heathens, at one time by argument, at another by violence, Christians had to defend themselves ; and they did so by numerous writings, in which they set forth the grounds of their faith, explained its nature and effects, dwelt upon the contrast which it presented to the religious systems of their adversaries, and answered the arguments which were employed against them. Some of these apologies have perished, and we know only the light in which they were regarded by friends who enjoyed the opportunity of perusing them at the time. Others have been handed down to us, and these not only form one of the most interesting parts of Christian literature, but give us a wonderfully graphic impression of the difficulties with which the members of the Infant Church had to contend. Every weapon which ignorance, prejudice, misrepresentation, and hatred could supply was employed against them. They were charged at one moment with atheism, at another with superstition. They were denounced as guilty of the most vicious excesses, and of the most heinous crimes. They were proscribed as the enemies of the Emperor and of the constituted authorities of the day. Above all, by the introduction of this new religion they turned the world upside down ; and nothing could convince them that they were wrong. Their fanaticism was wild ; their obstinacy was inflexible ; judging all, they refused to be judged by any ; they were moved neither by torture nor death. Even the mildest heathens were roused to indignation by this obstinacy. In his celebrated letter to Trajan at the beginning of the second century the younger Pliny, while desiring to do justice to the Christians brought

before him for punishment, loses all patience with what he terms their 'depraved and excessive superstition,' and has 'no doubt that, whatever was the nature of their religion, a sullen and obstinate inflexibility called for the vengeance of the magistrate.' If it was so with such as he, we can better understand the fury of the mob, who, not satisfied with persecuting them in life, did not even spare them when dead, but tore their bodies from the rest of the tomb, cut them in pieces, and rent them asunder.<sup>1</sup>

Excesses such as these, together with the charges by which they were justified, proved of the highest importance to the Church in the first stages of her development. They compelled her to examine into the grounds of her faith, and to make it clear to herself that she was following no cunningly devised fables, but that she could give a reason of her hope with an intelligent mind, a good conscience, and a dauntless heart. They called forth the men known as Christian apologists; and in no age of her history has the Church of Christ produced defenders of her faith more distinguished by the highest qualities both of mind and heart. Men like Justin Martyr, Tatian, the unknown author of the Epistle to Diognetus, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Tertullian, Cyprian, Arnobius, display in their apologetic writings an acquaintance with both the sacred and profane literature of the time, a keenness of insight into the statements they would refute, a capacity of distinguishing between the essential and the non-essential in Christianity, an acuteness in exposing the weak points of an opponent's case, a power of

<sup>1</sup> Tertullian, *Apology*, sect. 37.

sarcasm and of irony, to say nothing of a commanding eloquence, which would do no dishonour to the most brilliant apologists of succeeding centuries. The necessity for such apologies was a large part of the education of the Church. They contributed powerfully to lead her to a knowledge of herself and of her work.

2. In the second place, we see the Church, during the period before us, settling the details of *her Constitution and Government*.

It would seem as if we must tread gently here. The crust of the soil is thin, and we cannot conceal from ourselves the fact that immediately beneath our feet are the still hot ashes that have been accumulated by the fires of centuries. There is no need that it should be so, or that the ashes should be so difficult to cool. The question is one of historical development, and it is not easy to understand the amount of feeling exhibited by the different parties mainly interested in the controversy. No branch of the Christian Church in existence at the present hour can show that its constitution and government are precisely similar to those of the early Church. All existing churches differ in important respects from the model which they profess to imitate, and not one of them is entitled to charge others with a greater departure than its own from the primitive organization of the Christian community. A Church of Christ, constituted as the early Christian Church was, would differ from them all, and would justly rebuke their several pretensions.

Without, however, entering further upon this at present, let me rather say that, from the beginning,



two great constitutional principles appear in the history of the Church, and that the problem of her government consisted then, as it has always done, in harmonizing the two with one another, and in so determining their mutual relations as to preserve the rights of both. On the one hand, there was the principle that a personal priesthood belongs to every follower of Christ; that no man, and no body of men, is entitled to come between the soul and God; that the most free, gracious, and immediate access to the Father of spirits is the privilege of every man, woman, and child in the Christian community. On the other hand, there was the principle that our Lord came to do more than to bestow salvation on individuals, or to raise them to exalted privileges; that He came to found a society, to establish a community, to inaugurate a fellowship, to erect a kingdom upon earth; that the whole body of Christians is as a body the successor and representative of Christ; and that in the Church collectively,—in it all, and not in any caste or individual within it,—dwells the fulness of the Spirit.<sup>1</sup> The one principle secures the privilege of each member of the body: the other secures the unity, the organization, and the co-operation of all the members, whether in or out of office, for the common profit.

<sup>1</sup> Comp. Lightfoot's *Essay on the Christian Ministry*, p. 182; Moberly's *Bampton Lectures*, p. 49. The following are the words of the latter writer:—'There can, I suppose, be no doubt that, in the language of Holy Scripture, it is the Church entire and complete, not any class, or rank, or caste of persons within it, which is spoken of as the Spirit-bearing body of Christ, the successor of Christ, the holder of power and privilege in Christ,—nay, even as Christ Himself upon the earth.'

The early Church maintained both these principles ; and she united them by asserting the existence of a divinely appointed ministry, a ministry deriving its authority not from the Church but from Christ, and through which, according to God's own plan, the blessings promised in His covenant are conveyed to all the members of the body.<sup>1</sup> It followed as a necessary consequence that no man was entitled to assume the office of the ministry to himself. Had it not indeed been so, the Church would have been compelled to abandon, even as a matter of order, the idea of the ministry altogether. We can have no right by any arrangements of ours to limit the free actings of the Spirit of God, or to restrain where He has not restrained. If, as is undeniably the case, God has bestowed upon many private members of the Church both the natural and the spiritual aptitude to teach and to administer the sacraments, upon what other principle shall we refuse to recognise in that aptitude a Divine call on them to do so ? What are we that, in the name of any human order whatsoever, we should resist God ? Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh ; out of the fulness of the fountain the stream flows ; and the man whose heart, or the fountain of whose life, is full, is well entitled to urge that the natural issues of that fulness may not be checked by any merely human considerations or rules. The Church, accordingly, is able to defend the existence of a ministry only by tracing it to a Divine command ; and she has always done so. She has seen in our Lord's sending forth of the twelve Apostles,<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Comp. Clement's *First Ep.*, chap. xlii.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. xxviii. 19, 20.

in the practice of the first Christians,<sup>1</sup> and in the injunctions of St. Paul to Timothy and Titus,<sup>2</sup> clear indications of her Master's will.<sup>3</sup>

This, however, is after all only the general principle. The principle had to be carried out in practical detail, but the earliest stages of that process are unfortunately involved in great obscurity. The almost total want of authorities, the looseness of statement in those which we actually possess, the fact that no general rule seems to have prevailed, and the changes that have taken place in the meaning of words, have embarrassed all inquirers. This much alone appears to be certain, that by the very beginning of the second century we have unequivocal traces of three classes of the ministry, known as bishops, presbyters, and deacons; that throughout the whole of the second and third centuries changes were still gradually going on; and that, at the end of that time or shortly afterwards, we are everywhere met by a great hierarchical establishment, consisting of not a few subordinate officers whom it is unnecessary to name, but rising above whom in gradual succession were deacons, presbyters, bishops, metropolitans, patriarchs, and the power of the Bishop of Rome rapidly advancing to the height which it afterwards reached when the development was complete. The phenomenon is the most remarkable, and the most pregnant with tremendous consequences, that has been witnessed in Christian history since the Church was founded on the day of Pentecost.

<sup>1</sup> Acts xiii. 2, 3; xiv. 23.

<sup>2</sup> 2 Tim. ii. 2; Titus i. 5.

<sup>3</sup> For the doctrine of the Church of Scotland upon this point, comp. Hill's *Lectures*, Book ii. ch. 2; Bannerman *on the Church of Christ*, vol. i. p. 421, etc.,

It is the more remarkable, too, when we consider the natural and simple manner in which the development took place. There is no reason to think that it was due to the desire on the part of a church becoming secularised and earthly, to imitate the organization of the Roman empire, and to make herself strong by the political devices which had resulted in the mighty and majestic spectacle presented by that empire to the world. Nor is it possible to lay one's hand upon a few ambitious churchmen during these times, and to say, These were the men who beguiled the simple people of Christ into a submission to ecclesiastical authority which was foreign to the spirit of their faith. The development began too early to permit us to adopt the former explanation, to say nothing of the fact that the second and third centuries were precisely that period of all the Church's history when her enemies would not permit her to become secularised and earthly. They were emphatically centuries of persecution,—bitter, cruel, unrelenting persecution. For short intervals indeed the Church had rest, and the process of secularising began. But her enemies soon brought these intervals to an end, though from them they gained more than from all the blood they shed. It was not the time, therefore, for the Church to imitate the grandeur of the world. She rather ran the risk of shrinking out of this world altogether and of looking solely to a better. Then, again, the great names that have come down to us are not those of aspiring ecclesiastics who sought worldly influence either for themselves or for the body represented by them. In so far as they lent their aid to increasing the power of the clergy they were animated by

motives of an entirely different kind. Their main desire was to strengthen the Church against her enemies, to realise and express that conception of her unity which had so deep a hold of the minds of the early believers, and to erect a bulwark against the encroachments of heresy.

The truth is that by far the most interesting and important fact connected with the growth of the hierarchical constitution of the Church is to be found in the utterly unconscious way in which it assumed the dimensions to which it grew. No one foresaw what was to happen ; and, when traces of the approaching danger did appear, it is probable that many who, like Cyprian, had helped it forward, devoted, like him, their utmost energies to resist that increasing power of Rome which was by and by to defend itself as a logical deduction from their own reasonings. The growth of the hierarchy was gradual. It arose naturally out of the peculiar conditions and urgent necessities of the age.

This consideration also shows us that, if we are entitled to judge any one part of the development, we are entitled to judge the whole of it, because each successive step was the natural sequence of what preceded. We cannot plead that we may reject it in its later, if we are bound to accept it in its earlier stages. No break in it offers a clear dividing line at which we may say, To this point we shall come, but no further. We must either have a right to judge it all, from the moment when it left its Divine fundamental basis ; or, on the principle that every arrangement of the Church is due to the infallible guidance of the Holy Spirit, we must admit

it all. In the latter case the consequences will press upon us with slow, it may be, but unerring certainty, and we shall find it extremely difficult, when we set out on our pilgrimage after truth, to stop short of Rome.

Was there, then, any Divine fundamental basis connected with the constitution and government of the Church which, had it not been abandoned, might have admitted of whatever advantages belonged to the hierarchy, and yet have checked the later degeneracy? It would seem as if there were; and the history of the second and third centuries is peculiarly valuable, because it shows how clearly this basis was apprehended, and how firmly it was clung to, for a long period.

There is no difficulty in stating what the basis was. It consisted in this—that there was only one Divinely appointed *Order* of men to which Christ had committed the task of preaching the Word, administering the sacraments, exercising discipline, presiding over congregations, and ruling both in them and in the Church at large. There was indeed almost from the beginning a second Order, unless the term be improperly applied to it, which took its rise from the appointment of deacons mentioned in the sixth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles; but that institution sprang from extraordinary and accidental circumstances. There is no sufficient evidence that, though immediately adopted in other churches, such as that of Philippi,<sup>1</sup> it was designed by the Apostles to be either general or permanent; and, though the qualifications of the deacon as an already existing

<sup>1</sup> Phil. i. 1.

officer are described in the First Epistle to Timothy (chap. iii. 8-13), it is nowhere stated in that Epistle that the office was to be a necessary part of the organized system of the Church. We may, therefore, omit notice of deacons, and confine ourselves to the single class of which I have spoken.

That the persons introduced into this class are in the New Testament called at one time bishops, at another presbyters, and that there, therefore, they constitute only one *Order*, is a fact so universally admitted, that nothing need be said of it. Nor on the other hand need I take note of a second equally important fact, that Scripture appears to recognise the existence of such a presidency among the presbyters to whom the charge of a congregation was committed as the circumstances would naturally demand.<sup>1</sup> What chiefly concerns us now is that, down to a late date in the third century, the Scriptural view as to the essential oneness of the offices represented by the two designations continued to prevail. Numerous passages are to be found in almost all the great writers of the time, making it clear that they saw no essential distinction between the bishop and the presbyter. The *functions* of the two offices were different, and *duties*, such as those of ruling and governing, were committed in increasing measure to the one, and withdrawn from the other. But the primary conception of both offices was the same. The essential powers and commission of both did not differ; and even those who at the beginning of our period were most disposed, like Ignatius, to magnify the bishop, thought of him as an official

<sup>1</sup> 1 Tim. iv. 14.

presiding over a congregation rather than a wide area of the Church. It appears from the Coptic Constitutions,<sup>1</sup> that the pastor of the smallest village church was not less a bishop than the leading superintendent of many large and powerful congregations. Nor was it otherwise as time advanced. The extent of the bishop's sway was then enlarged, but as yet he was really and essentially a presbyter. Just as the High Priest of Israel was no more than a priest with superadded functions ; or as, to use Jerome's illustration at the close of the fourth century, an archdeacon, chosen out of the deacons, was still a deacon, though the chief deacon, so a bishop set over presbyters was still a presbyter, though the chief presbyter.<sup>2</sup> In other words, Jerome strenuously defended the principle which had been still more tersely expressed by the Roman Hilary many years before, 'There is one ordination of the bishop and the presbyter. . . . Every bishop is a presbyter, but every presbyter is not a bishop. He is a bishop who is first among the presbyters.'<sup>3</sup>

We are not, however, left upon this point to mere expressions of opinion. The action of the Church confirms the view. This is to be seen in the fact that the designations of the persons occupying the two offices were frequently interchanged, bishops being spoken of as presbyters, and presbyters as bishops ; that the various titles springing out of the nature of

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by Pressensé (*Christian Life and Preaching*, p. 59. The original will be found in Bunsen's *Analecta Antenicana*, vol. ii. p. 456).

<sup>2</sup> *Epistola cxlvi. ad Evangelum* : Migne, *Patr. Lat.* xxii. p. 1194.

<sup>3</sup> On 1 Tim. iii. 10. *Uterque enim Sacerdos est, sed Episcopus primus est* : Migne, *Patr. Lat.* xviii. p. 479.



their functions, such as pastors, presidents, governors of the people, were applied to both ; and that duties which were at a later period specially connected with their respective offices were long discharged by all who presided over the congregation. It is not denied that the consent of the bishop was early held to be necessary to the discharge of many of these duties by the presbyter, but this very consent implies that the latter possessed an inherent capability of doing them. The consent of a higher official of the Church might convey to a lower a right to act on particular occasions, but it could not convey to him power to make actions valid, for the validity of which his own special consecration was required. When then we find that whatever a bishop did a presbyter could also do, the inference is inevitable, that the only difference between them was in degree and not in Order.<sup>1</sup>

It has indeed been urged that this community of action did not apply to ordination.<sup>2</sup> The point is so important that it cannot be omitted ; but we must again distinguish between arrangements thought to promote the better government of the Church, and the inherent powers of office. When we do so we find that the mode in which ordination was conferred, even after it had been laid down that it was the province of the bishop to ordain, strikingly confirms what has been said. The bishop never ordained alone ; and, although he may in the act have at times associated

<sup>1</sup> Comp. King's *Primitive Church*, Part i. ch. 4.

<sup>2</sup> Jerome's words are : *Quid enim facit, excepta ordinatione, episcopus quod Presbyter non faciat ?* (Epist. cxlvi. u. s.). Comp. Chrysostom, Hom. xi. on 1 Timothy.

other bishops with himself (unless, in so assisting, these were regarded as presbyters), the rule was that he should summon two at least of his presbyters to help him. As, again, an integral part of ordination consisted in the laying on of hands, these presbyters invariably laid hands, along with the bishop, on the head of the person to be ordained. So important was this arrangement considered to be, that as late as the close of the fourth century, in a council held at Carthage in the year 398, it was expressly decreed that when a presbyter was ordained all the presbyters present should hold their hands beside the hands of the bishop upon his head.<sup>1</sup> 'This,' says Baur, 'can only have been an ancient custom, derived from the time when presbyters and bishops were on an equality, and the bishop, as compared with the presbyters, was only *primus inter pares*.'<sup>2</sup>

There is more, however, to be said. The Church never considered the laying on of hands to be a mere empty sign. It was a symbol no doubt, but it was a symbol of something real, of grace conferred, of a communication of spirit and life adapted to the work to which the subject of the act was set aside; and, so far at least as man could see, the bestowal of the grace was dependent upon the orderly administration of the rule appointed for that purpose by the Church's Head. If, therefore, two Orders of men were engaged in the act, it would follow that grace of two different

<sup>1</sup> Presbyter quum ordinatur, episcopo eum benedicente et manum super caput ejus tenente, etiam omnes presbyteri qui præsentes sunt manus suas juxta manum episcopi super caput illius teneant. Quoted by Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, A.D. 1—311, p. 421.

<sup>2</sup> *Church History of the First Three Centuries*, vol. ii. p. 24.

kinds must have been conferred when, at the same moment and in the same way, each bore its own part in the ceremony. Such a state of matters is inconceivable. It would have involved the whole ceremonial in confusion and perplexity.

Or, if there was a difference of meaning in the act as thus performed by two classes of men, in what did the difference consist? It has been supposed that presbyters, by the laying on of hands, only testified their consent to what was done, and their approbation of the person ordained. But in these times the consent and approbation of the whole Church was not less necessary than that of the presbyters. Her consent therefore ought to have been testified in the same way. Or, again, it has been said that the presbyters thereby dedicated their brother to a ministry which was conferred on him by the bishop. But ordination as a whole was simply dedication to the ministry, accompanied by an act to which the Divine blessing was annexed. If therefore the presbyter could do no less than dedicate, what could the bishop do more? The dedicating, and thus also the ordaining, power of the one was precisely equivalent to that of the other.<sup>1</sup> It is true that the bishop alone pronounced the blessing upon the candidate, or, if the expression be preferred, alone pronounced the consecrating prayer (*episcopo benedicente*); but ordination was not effected by prayer alone, and it was simply the natural order of things that prayer should be offered by one instead of many, and that the highest official taking part in the ceremony should be selected for the purpose.

<sup>1</sup> *Nemo enim tribuit quod non accepit.* Hilary on 1 Tim. iii. 10, *u. s.*

There is another fact bearing upon this point to which attention has been recently called by an eminent minister of our own Church. 'It is a remarkable fact,' says Dr. Sprott, 'that, while the *Apostolic Constitutions* enjoin the laying on of hands at the ordination of presbyters, this is omitted in the directions for the making of bishops.'<sup>1</sup> Let us add to this another fact that, following the example of the Apostles as recorded in Acts vi. 6, deacons were always ordained by imposition of hands,<sup>2</sup> and it will not be easy to find a clearer proof that the Episcopate was not considered a separate Order. It was a function, a high function, a function which had all the prestige of remote antiquity, of times bordering on the age of the Apostles, perhaps even of the apostolic age, to plead on its behalf. But it was not an Order by itself, and it had no inherent right of alone continuing the succession of the ministry. All that was necessary to this had in ordination been conferred on the presbyterate.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Worship and Offices of the Church of Scotland*, p. 189, note.

<sup>2</sup> Bingham, *Antiquities*, i. xx. 3.

<sup>3</sup> I may be permitted to make one remark in a note in connexion with the point of which I have been speaking in the text. It is alleged that, although the existence of three Orders cannot be proved from Scripture, the necessity of episcopal ordination is established by the universal consensus of the Church to which the promise of the Spirit had been given. We have seen that this is not the case. But let us suppose that it had been otherwise, I urge that this is not a point which the Church, even in the fulness of the Spirit, could determine. It is not a matter of development in the sense in which the Church is entitled to develop Scripture truth. It is a question of fact. If the Church was entitled to say, 'There are three Orders, and upon the recognition of this and of episcopal ordination connected with it the whole validity of the ministry and of the sacraments depends,' this is neither more nor less than an alteration of the terms of salvation. It

Such then was the principle maintained by the Church during the most important period of her history, and the value of the principle may be at once perceived. It was not inconsistent, on the one hand, with that hierarchical government which marked later centuries. Neither, on the other, was it inconsistent with that doctrine of the personal priesthood of all Christians which is so firmly imbedded in the New Testament, and which was so thoroughly upheld by the great Fathers of early times. It steered a middle course between the individualism which ultimately resolves Christ's kingdom into a mere general leaven leavening our ordinary lives, and all systems which interpose a special caste between the humblest Christian and the Father of our spirits. It recognised what appears to be a true relation between the Old Testament dispensation and the New,—that the institutions of the former are not primarily fulfilled in any corresponding arrangements of the latter, *but in Christ Himself*, out of whom and from whom all the ordinances of His kingdom flow. It owned only one great High Priest at the right hand of God ; and it saw in the ministers of the

is absolutely incontestable that neither our Lord nor His Apostles made the carrying out of His grace, even within the covenant, dependent upon the fact that presbyters should be ordained by bishops. The Church can have no right to lay down a fundamental principle not laid down by them. She may develop into fulness what they gave in germ. She may make explicit what was implicitly contained in their words. But to speak of three Orders, when it is allowed that the New Testament knows only two or one, is not a development ; it is an *addition* to the truth revealed. It is a new fact. Three is not a development of two : it is one added to two ; and, as in a chemical combination, the one measure added may completely alter the nature of the whole mass.

Church not priests in a sense different from that in which all God's people are priests, but rather 'servants' of the Christian Body 'for Jesus' sake.' At the same time it preserved their authority; made them feel that their office had been instituted by God Himself; conveyed to them the assurance that they were not ambassadors of the Church, but ambassadors of Christ, stewards called by Him to administer His mysteries; and gave them at once the boldness and the confidence of success which such an assurance could alone impart. Had it not been afterwards set aside in favour of the idea that the episcopate was a separate Order from that of the presbyterate, there is no reason to think that the hierarchical development of the Church would have ended in the tyranny of the Romish See, while yet the great ends which so naturally led to the introduction of the episcopate would have been secured.

It may be worth while to observe that the principle of which I have spoken was never wholly abandoned in the Church. The Scholastics and the Canonists of the middle ages were divided upon the point, the latter asserting for bishops a peculiar Order, the former regarding them as belonging to the presbyterate.<sup>1</sup> Bellarmine argues that the episcopate and presbyterate are two species of the priesthood; one Order, but different degrees;<sup>2</sup> and it is believed that the question is still an open one in the Romish Church. During the reign of Henry VIII. the Church of England did not even leave the question open, but declared bishops and presbyters to be by Divine right

<sup>1</sup> Chemnicii *Exam. Conc. Trident.*, p. 420 b.

<sup>2</sup> Blunt's *Dictionary*, ORDERS, IIOLY.

one Order, thus removing a main obstacle to inter-communion between herself and the other Reformed Churches.

I have no charge in this lecture to apply the lessons of the past to the circumstances of the present. But it may be observed in passing, that, were these views of the Church of the second and third centuries adopted now, we should have a foundation laid for that reconciliation between Presbytery and Episcopacy which would produce a far larger amount of blessing to the land than any reconciliation of the different branches of the Presbyterian Church.

3. In the third place, we see the Church addressing herself, during the period before us, *to the development of her theology*. Some of her outward difficulties have met us; but, in the growth of man, outward difficulties are not to be compared with those that proceed from within. We come to what we ultimately are, far less by struggle with the world than by struggle with ourselves. This principle was exhibited in the Church, and the degree and manner in which it was so form one of the most important chapters of her early history. It is indeed impossible at present to deal with any of her positive doctrinal statements. Even if time permitted me to do so, it must be remembered that little doctrine was actually formulated during the second and third centuries. The first great creed was not promulgated till the council of Nicæa, which met twenty-four years after the fourth century began; and the one theological document belonging to our present period is that known, though inaccurately, as the Apostles' Creed. It will be well, therefore, to notice only two general points connected with the state of

theology at this time—(1.) the fact that theological development existed; (2.) the spirit in which the Church pursued it.

(1.) The fact that theological development existed. It would be a mistake to imagine that, because the first great creed belongs to the fourth century, dogmatic conviction did not begin till then. Such conviction was involved in the very idea of Christianity as a system which appeals not only to the feelings but to the reason, and it has asserted its legitimate rights from the earliest moment of the Church's history until now. There may be, and there is, a disposition on the part of many to regard the growth and development of doctrinal theology as a misfortune to the Church, and to think that she would be happier, more acceptable, and more useful if she would content herself with the simple facts of the life of Christ as they are stated in the Gospels. It is enough to say at present that such stagnation is impossible; and that, were it possible, the remedy would be worse than the disease. Doctrinal theology must ever be the highest sphere within which the thought of the religious mind can exercise its powers, and in point of fact it has been the greatest educator of the world. That education began in the writings of the Apostles themselves, for the Epistles of the New Testament are less statements of facts than interpretations and applications of them. And, when we so interpret and apply, we are already in the region of doctrinal theology. Beginning then it went on continually increasing; and no aspect of the second and third centuries is more full of interest than that which shows us the Church endeavouring to make



clear to herself the precise nature and bearing of the faith which had come down to her.

There existed at the time the most extraordinary ferment of ideas upon all those points which constitute the peculiar province of the Christian faith. From its very nature that faith came in contact with every part of previous beliefs; and these beliefs were of the most varied character. The faith of the Jews, the longings of the Gentiles, the religious speculations of the East upon matters almost impenetrable to the human mind, the practical inquiries of the West, the mediating philosophy of Alexandria, were all active in that age of religious transition; and all were contending with one another, and endeavouring to gain permanent possession of the minds of men. There was a whirl of conflicting opinions, assertions, suppositions, doubts, many of which it is now hardly possible to understand; while others, when understood, appear so extravagant and fantastic that it is difficult to imagine how any should have been found to entertain them. No greater testimony can be given to the power of Christian thought than that, touching these as it did in the vigour of its fresh young life, it threw off their false and assimilated their true elements, until it grew up into the stately form of the more fully developed system of later centuries.

Amidst these phases of thought two are particularly worthy of notice, because to a certain extent they repeat themselves in all ages—Ebionism, and Gnosticism. I can do no more than mention them. The first would have transformed the Church of Christ into a narrow Jewish sect. The second,

dissolving the facts in order to reach the ideal, would have reduced Christianity to a merely philosophical speculation. The Church was compelled so to fashion her doctrine that, while remaining true to the revelation given in Christ and the inspired teachers who immediately succeeded Him, she should be able to meet men's present wants. To have repeated only the facts lying at the basis of the Christian system would not have been enough. Both the opposing tendencies which she had to combat acknowledged the facts at least in words. They erred in misinterpreting them. What could the Church do but urge the true interpretation? This was theology; and, so looked at, who will venture to find fault with it? The Church would have been faithless to her commission had she not acted as she did. She threw herself into the contest. She began to enlarge and to define the Baptismal formula; and, when we take in succession the several articles of the Apostles' Creed, it will be found that these were in all probability moulded into the form which they received in order to meet the erroneous, and particularly the Gnostic, opinions that were then abroad.<sup>1</sup>

In thus acting, the Church undoubtedly proved herself a faithful steward of the mysteries of God. She proceeded upon the unquestionable principle, that she can never in any age exhaust the rich manifoldness of the truth committed to her care; and that, however deeply we may have drunk of the fountain of living water, there are fresh supplies bubbling up to quench the thirst of weary travellers

<sup>1</sup> Comp. Hind's *Rise and Early Progress of Christianity*, part iii. chap. 6.

to the end of time. It is the reverse of dishonour to the word of God that this view should be taken of it. It is no reflection on the Apostles of our Lord to say that even they could not comprehend, as we need to comprehend it, the full significance of Him to whom they witnessed. How could they? They could not have understood the wants of later centuries, though they had been set in words before them, because they had not those ideas to put into the words which could alone have made the words intelligible. How then could they give the full interpretation needed to meet these wants? They had not the wards of the lock; how could they make the key to fit it? Not indeed that the later Church was to have power to add to the revelation of God in Christ. All Christian truth was given us in Him. The moment we pass beyond Him we are no longer Christians. But, though given in Him, it was not unfolded, and it was the province of the members of Christ's body to do this according to their own needs and circumstances. The Church of the period with which we are now dealing began that work.

(2.) It is not enough, however, to say this. The spirit in which the Church pursued theological development is not less worthy of our regard. Nothing is more remarkable than the manner in which she combined steadfast maintenance of the essential doctrines of the Christian faith with toleration and freedom of inquiry. She showed no trace of a desire to limit interpretations of the facts of the Gospel history, so long as they were not explained away. She seems to have instinctively distinguished between acceptance of facts and speculations as to the mean-

ing of facts. The former was necessary. To the latter a large liberty was allowed. There were certain fundamental verities, without accepting which no one could be acknowledged as a Christian ; but the Scripture principle was clearly recognised, that the unity of the Church is not to be broken because of diversities of opinion on non-essential points.<sup>1</sup> Inquiry was not crushed as it was in Germany after the days of Luther, till a reaction was provoked, from which the noble theologians of that country have hardly yet recovered. Nor was it discouraged as it was in Scotland, till theology became almost an unknown science, and ministers, unable to feed their people with formulas of the past out of which the life had perished, were too often constrained to resort to vague sentiment, lifeless morality, and superficial æstheticism.

There were some exceptions to this ; but take the Church of our two centuries as a whole, and nothing is more remarkable than that, notwithstanding all the power and prevalence of the heretical sects ; nay, notwithstanding the fact that, as was especially the case in Montanism, these sects often brought into prominence truth which was sinking into neglect, they were never able to overcome her catholic position. In the end she triumphed, not they. Why was this ? Because she was catholic. Because her position was wider than theirs. They raised particular points into importance, and were often right. But they were

<sup>1</sup> See an interesting passage in Firmilian's letter to Cyprian, formerly referred to, *Cypr. Epist.* lxxv. 6 (5). No doubt Firmilian was in trouble at the time, and trouble has often been the best teacher of toleration.

narrow. The points for which they contended were insufficient to justify schism, or to secure for them a permanent footing in the history of the Church. What a lesson for our own day! *In necessariis unitas, in non-necessariis libertas, in omnibus caritas* ought to be our motto. It has been made a reproach to Rome that she has as many and as diverse tendencies in her bosom as Protestantism has. Rome may rather glory in the fact, because all the different tendencies within her acknowledge the uniting power of one common bond, and contribute to one common end.

4. In the fourth place, we see the Church of the period before us *determining the leading features of her worship*. Had time permitted I should have rejoiced in the opportunity of quoting to you some of the simple and beautiful descriptions of the worship of the Early Christian Church which have come down to us. It is the less necessary, however, to do this, as some of them were quoted by the lecturer who preceded me. Instead of examining details let me rather direct your thoughts to one or two of the more general characteristics of the worship of that age.

(1.) In all assemblies of Christians at the time the idea of *worship* comes prominently forth. There is no doubt also direct instruction, although it would appear that that instruction partook more of the nature of Scripture Exposition than of elaborate and sustained discourses upon single texts. But the celebration of the Lord's Supper together with prayer and praise were the chief objects of the common meeting. Christians met as persons already within the Church, partakers of redemption, heirs of the promise of eternal life, in communion with the

Father and the Son, and with the glorified saints who had already completed their pilgrimage and were now enjoying their reward. They met therefore mainly to pour forth the sentiments of devotion by which they were animated, and to offer up through Him who had suffered for them a sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, 'the fruit of lips which make confession to His name' (Heb. xiii. 15).

(2.) Of this service the Sacrament of the Supper, or the Communion of the body and blood of Christ, was the central part. All that went before was preparatory to it, and found in it its culmination. Nor was the Supper a mere commemoration of the death of Christ. The living Lord was present to the view, and the communicants regarded the celebration as a feast in which they were nourished by a risen and ascended Redeemer. They had no thought of a repetition of the sacrifice on Calvary, as if the blood of Christ needed to be shed again. But there was a constant identifying of themselves with the Victim there, so that, dying in His death, they might also make a presentation to God of themselves and of their new life, in Him who constantly presents Himself to the Father in the new life of His own glorified humanity. The Supper therefore was essentially a Eucharist, a crowning act of self-surrender in the death of Christ, and an offering up of self in the life of Christ, with the joyful thankfulness of men who had been made partakers of a complete redemption.

(3.) The whole worship had its origin in the Christian ideas with which the breasts of the worshippers were filled. No doubt some of it may have been suggested by the worship of the Synagogue ;

some of it even by that of the Temple, for no conviction had a stronger hold of the early Christian Church than that all Christians were priests. Yet it is impossible to look at early Christian worship without being satisfied that the Christian sentiment itself was that out of which the service sprang, and which lent meaning and unity to it all. Hence the remarkable prominence of the thought of the resurrection of Christ. The very day on which Christians met for worship was not the Sabbath, but Sunday, the day of the Resurrection. The conception entertained of the day was that it was a festival, not a day of fasting, a day to which belonged not humiliation and shame, but elevation and joy in the thought of a full salvation and a place in heaven. The Church of these times could never have been guilty of the mistake once made by our own General Assembly when it appointed a fast to be held upon the Lord's day, if no convenient weekday could easily be found for it. The combination would have seemed utterly inconsistent with the Christian ideal, and with the meaning of God's gracious appointment of a holy and a happy rest upon the day when the Redeemer of men came forth triumphant from the grave. The attitude assumed in prayer testified to the same conviction. That attitude was standing, the attitude of the Lamb, 'as though it had been slain,' seen by St. John in the visions of the Apocalypse,<sup>1</sup>—the risen and glorified Lamb. One who ventured to kneel in prayer upon the Lord's day would have run the risk of being taken on discipline for his ignorance or carelessness in what he did. The

<sup>1</sup> Rev. v. 6.

hymns of Christians at that time carry us no less to Christian ideas as the source out of which they came. One other point may be mentioned in corroboration of the conclusion to which these considerations lead. The great Festival of the Christian year was not then Christmas, but Easter. Those who in our day attach importance to the restoration of the festival seasons of early Christianity often begin with Christmas. The Church of early times would not have done so. She would have fastened, as she actually did fasten, upon Easter, for she lived in the thought of Christ's death and resurrection more than in that of His birth. The celebration of Christmas was indeed the last to be introduced, and then the great cycle was completed, five Festivals,—Christmas, Epiphany, Easter, Ascension-day, and Whitsun-day,—marking the flow of the Christian year and speaking to the believer of all time as sacred. Good Friday was a fast, not a feast. (4.) The worship of the day invited the whole congregation to take part in it. It was the age of translations both of the Old Testament and of the New into the common tongue of all the lands to which the sacred books penetrated ; and there is no reason to doubt that the translation, not the original, was read in public worship. Not only so. The people even were summoned into action, and in the Church of Africa a custom long prevailed among the preachers (though the evidence is later than the period of which I speak) of quoting only part of any scriptural passage cited in their sermons, and pausing for the rest of it to be spoken aloud by the congregation.<sup>1</sup> In addition to this the prayers were to a large extent liturgical,

<sup>1</sup> *Hind*, p. 236.



so that the congregation knew beforehand what they were to be; and, without being exposed to the danger of only listening, could follow them either mentally or aloud. At the close they uttered a loud Amen. (5.) One other point ought to be noticed in connexion with the worship of the congregation at this time. No uniformity was required. Thus the fast before Easter varied in different churches from one day to six weeks; and, while the Paschal controversies of the second century are memorable on many grounds, there are few things connected with them more interesting than this, that when the venerable Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, visited Anicetus, Bishop of Rome, in the second half of the second century (A.D. 162), and discussed with him the time of celebrating Easter, the two Bishops, though unable to agree, parted in peace, while the Bishop of Rome, in token of the friendly feelings with which he regarded the venerable disciple of St. John, asked him to celebrate the holy festival in his church. A different spectacle was indeed presented thirty years later, when, on the renewal of the controversy (A.D. 190), the imperious Victor, Bishop of Rome, excommunicated the Asiatic churches because they refused to adopt the Roman order. But Anicetus acted in the tolerant spirit of his time; Victor, although opposed by Irenæus on behalf of the Gallican Bishops, in the spirit of the despotism which was ere long to overspread the whole Christian world.

Such are at least some of the characteristics of the worship of the Church in the second and third centuries. Towards the end of that period, indeed, it became much more elaborate; and it is impossible *not to feel* that, although orderliness and beauty

ought always to mark our worship, this elaborateness was accompanied, whether as a cause or a consequence it is unnecessary to ask, by all the symptoms of spiritual decay. Necessary as, according to the very constitution of man, symbolism is, and great as is its power over many minds, history seems to teach that its legitimate bounds may be only too easily transgressed. Nothing is more powerful than simplicity, nothing more beautiful. The heart is touched far more by the simple symbols of the catacombs, the shepherd carrying home his lost sheep, the lyre, the dove, the fish, the cup, the anchor, the boat tossed upon a stormy sea, than by all the pictures, statues, gold, and glitter of later times. The lovers of ornate ritual in our day may well consider whether they do not run the risk of presenting to men a Christ according to the flesh rather than Him who, clothed in a 'spiritual body' at the right hand of the Father, rules by His Spirit in the hearts of His people. This certainly took place in the early Church; and, if the essential principles of human nature are not the same in every age, history must be written in vain.

5. In the fifth place, we see in the period before us the Church *unfolding her spiritual life*. My time will not permit me to dwell on this, although it opens up to us one of the most beautiful and touching chapters of the Church's early history. Placed in the midst of a world where vice and profligacy of every kind reigned to an unparalleled extent, her members preserved their garments unspotted by the flesh; and the secret of it all was Christ. They connected every act in which they engaged with sacred memories. When they took the bath they remembered the waters of Baptism in which they had been cleansed

## 72 *Church of the Second and Third Centuries.*

from sin: when they drank wine they brought to their remembrance the sacramental cup: when they put on their sandals they thought of the shoe latchet which John considered himself not worthy to unloose. Many hours both of the day and of the night were hallowed by the recollection that acts of the Saviour's life or steps in His passion were associated with them. Not only through the year, but through each successive group of fleeting hours, there ran the remembrance of their Lord.

In a like spirit they encountered suffering. So far from being discouraged by it they only became bolder, more confident, more full of hope and triumph. Tertullian compares them to the grass which grows the more luxuriantly the oftener it is mown, and glories in their blood as a seed from which fresh harvests spring.

Thus the early Christians lived, and thus they died. That there were many among them who fell short of this is no doubt true. It could not be otherwise. But we must judge them as a whole; and, when we do so, we may be thankful for what they were—a light in the midst of darkness, a salt of the earth which alone preserved it from corruption, a little flock which heard the voice of the Good Shepherd, and followed Him. Amidst the temptations and difficulties of our own time we may well try to catch their spirit and to imitate their example; and, if we cannot forget that, in the weakness of human nature they sowed much that has since borne bitter fruit, we ought still more to remember that, in the power of Divine grace, they appropriated and applied the principles of all that has since brightened the history *of the Church.*



# ST. GILES' LECTURES.

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*FOURTH SERIES—THE CHURCHES OF CHRISTENDOM.*

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## *LECTURE III.*

### THE CHURCH OF THE FOURTH AND FIFTH CENTURIES.

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BY the Church is meant the outward historical form in which Christianity, the vital system of thought and life emanating from Jesus Christ, presents itself from age to age. The ideas which lie at the basis of the Christian polity were contained implicitly in the words and works of Christ, but for the unfolding of their contents they had to be translated into life and embodied in an outward organisation. In this process of development the Church inevitably came into contact with other ideas. When these ideas were cognate to the fundamental ideas of Christianity, it was open to the Church to absorb or assimilate them, but when they were alien she had either to

resist and destroy them, or to effect a compromise. When the latter alternative was adopted, the process of development did not cease, but, the purity of the Church being impaired, there arose a twofold movement—on the one hand a continued development of the mingled elements, and on the other a struggle between the good and evil, resulting in the long-run in the victory of the former. Now these processes of development, of conflict, of compromise, and of purification, have been found side by side from the beginning, and it is only by keeping them in view that we can attain to an adequate comprehension of the history of the Church, for the form which the Church assumes at any period depends on the measure and kind of development she has attained, on the character of the ideas which she has assimilated, on the nature and extent of the compromise she has made with foreign elements, and on the success with which she has extruded or overcome alien influences. In the following lecture I propose to adduce illustrations of these various processes from the history of the Church during the fourth and the first half of the fifth century. Different periods bring different processes to the front. During the first century the primitive Church was chiefly engaged in spreading abroad the knowledge of Christ, and in deepening the spiritual life of her members. Opposition on the part of both Jew and Gentile she had to face, but it was for the most part blind, unintelligent, oftentimes capricious. Even at this early stage attempts at compromise may be detected in the rise of the various heresies. But development, much more than conflict or compromise, was the distinguishing feature of the

time. In the second and third centuries conflict comes into greater prominence, for during this period the Church had to encounter foes both within and without. Gnosticism, Manicheism, and the other heresies of that age, evoked opposition, in the course of which the lines of orthodoxy began to be traced, and a new criterion in the consensus of church opinion was gradually established. The process of development still continued, but the necessity for combating heresy tended to consolidate the Church and to bring into clear consciousness the idea of her unity. This growth and consolidation brought the Church into collision with the intellectual and political forces beyond her pale. She entered into deadly strife with heathenism in its twofold aspect of Greek thought and Roman power. The attacks of the former were met by the Apologists, the shock of the latter was borne by the Martyrs. It was the age of conflict, and of continued development. We come to-day to consider a period in which compromise comes more distinctly into view. The conflict with polytheism still continued, but the conditions under which the battle was waged were materially altered by the new attitude towards Christianity assumed by the Roman emperors. This new aspect of the conflict not only had an influence in shaping the further development of the Church's constitution and creed, but also was the means of introducing into Christian life and worship that compromise between Christianity and heathenism which characterises the religion of southern Europe to this day. Since, therefore, much in the internal state of the Church becomes intelligible only in the light of the struggle between

the old religions and the new, I begin with this as an illustration of the process of conflict.

I. CONFLICT.—The period with which we have to deal extends from the Edict of Milan (A.D. 313) to the council of Chalcedon (A.D. 451). That the earlier limit should be marked by an imperial decree and the later by an ecclesiastical council indicates not inaptly that in the interval the supreme power virtually passed over from the empire to the Church. The Edict of Milan, promulgated by the joint-emperors, Constantine and Licinius, granted full freedom to all existing forms of worship, and accorded express recognition to the Christian faith. The history of the next ten years proves that the edict itself was the work of Constantine and not of Licinius. Constantine believed (as the story of his vision of the cross proves) that he had gained his victory over Maxentius in the preceding year through the help of the Crucified One, but there can be little doubt that the way for this belief had been prepared by the estimate which as a statesman he had formed of the relative merits of heathenism and Christianity considered as forces in the moral and political world. He was keen-sighted enough to see that heathenism had lost its vital power and was on the wane, while Christianity with its store of moral vigour and unwavering faith, which had successfully borne the brunt of persecution, must inevitably continue to increase. It would be a mistake to suppose that Constantine in the beginning was a Christian. He seems to have imbibed, probably from the philosophic speculations of the time, a crude monotheism, and to have seen in the growth of Christianity a possible means of spreading this idea. He conceived

that the only protection against the threatened disruption and decay of the empire lay in a universal religion. The parallel between political and religious unity frequently recurs in his edicts, and represents the fundamental principle of his policy. So long as he shared the empire with Licinius he confined himself in his public measures to placing Christianity on a level with the ancient faiths. But the compensation which he granted to those who had been persecuted, his contributions to the support of bishops, and to the building of churches, the immunities and privileges which he granted to the clergy in common with the heathen priesthood, and the laws relating to Sunday, showed that he was disposed to favour the Christians. Though these steps were taken ostensibly in the interests of religious equality, yet they were in reality favourable to the new faith, for his conviction of the superior worth of Christianity must have led him to see that with a fair field it was sure to win the day. Licinius, on the other hand, began to persecute the Christians in the provinces under his sway, and, a quarrel between the two emperors having ensued, it became apparent that on the issue of the struggle depended the relative position of the faiths which they favoured. In 324, after the defeat and death of Licinius, Constantine openly declared himself on the side of Christianity, and solemnly invited all his subjects to embrace a religion which alone could insure the peace and prosperity of the empire. A year later he convened the first general council of the Church, the Council of Nicæa, and took a lively interest in its deliberations, not from an intelligent appreciation of the points in dispute, but from a hope of realising in the Church



that idea of unity which, after having in pursuit of it forsaken polytheism, he felt he was in danger of losing through the wrangling of contending factions. His apparent success seems to have led him to contemplate the abolition of idolatry, but he soon found that modes of thought inherited from past generations are not laid aside at the bidding even of an absolute monarch, and he had to content himself with the adoption of such measures as might in time work out the end he had in view. Without abridging oppressively the privileges of the ancient priesthood he extended those accorded to the Christian clergy ; while he left the temples to crumble unrepaired, he erected many churches at a lavish expense ; heathen emblems disappeared from his coins to make room for the monogram of Christ ; the ancient gods he allowed to remain undisturbed in their old home on the banks of the Tiber, but he deprived them as much as possible of the prestige derived from connection with the state by transferring the seat of government to the shores of the Bosphorus, and Byzantium, in becoming Constantinople, became also to all outward appearance a Christian city, governed exclusively by magistrates professing the new faith. Yet withal he found himself unable to cope effectually with heathenism, and instances are not wanting of his desire to conciliate those who still clung to the old beliefs. In his edicts vague terms were used into which heathen and Christian might each read his own meaning ; he styled himself 'a bishop for the external relations' of the Church, and yet retained to the end of his life the title and dignity of Pontifex Maximus, or high priest of the old religion. With his characteristic love of declamation he

preached to his court what he supposed to be Christian sermons, and yet the heathen could point to him as unbaptized. Chiefly as it seems from policy, though partly perhaps from a superstitious regard for the efficacy of the ordinance, he deferred his baptism till shortly before his death. The favour shown by Constantine to Christianity induced many from interested motives to declare themselves Christians. The presence in the Church of multitudes who had no sincere Christian convictions was the cause of much of the compromise which as we shall see characterised the life and worship of the succeeding generation. It led also to the development of a spirit of partisanship to which may be traced the repressive measures enacted against heathenism by the sons of Constantine. Participation in idol-worship or sacrifice was made a capital offence, and the tortures of rack and branding iron, which the Christians had endured in the days of martyrdom could now be legally inflicted on the heathen. This severity produced, as might have been expected, a reaction in favour of heathenism, and especially in the West the persecuting edicts could not be enforced.

Other influences were at work to strengthen this reaction. In the West heathenism was favoured by the superstition of the ignorant multitude and the interests of the privileged classes ; in the East it allied itself with letters and philosophy. In Rome the city officials were also the priestly dignitaries of the old religion, and from a desire to retain their prestige, possibly in some cases from patriotism, they humoured the lingering superstitions of the common people, who still held in reverence the time-honoured ritual and pagean-

try of heathenism, and who saw in the incursions of the barbarians from the North a punishment of the empire for abandoning the ancient worship. In the East, where letters and philosophy flourished, the masterpieces of Greek literature and art were so intertwined with the heathen mythology that to literary men the triumph of Christianity threatened to be the destruction of culture. Hence the most celebrated teachers of rhetoric in the fourth century, notably the famous Libanius, shared this feeling of repugnance to the new religion, and lost no opportunity of expressing contempt for 'the exotic and barbarous literature imported by Jews and Christians.' It is true that philosophy, even before the coming of Christ, had made havoc of the myths, and fashioned a purer ethical ideal, but its results had been mainly negative. Neo-Platonism, influenced probably by the growth of Christianity, had begun to put forth a constructive effort, and, in its earlier stages, seemed disposed to absorb Christianity itself. On its advances being repelled it went over to the side of heathenism, and by allegorising the myths endeavoured to save at once the literature in which the myths were imbedded, and the ethical ideas to which philosophy had attained. Hence the leading philosophers of the time were ranked among the opponents of Christianity.

The reaction came to a head in the person of the emperor Julian, whose reign of twenty months read aright is one of the pathetic episodes of history. With a temperament which predisposed him to the study of Greek literature, with a richly emotional nature delighting in the contemplation of the glory and the wonder of the Universe, with a deeply

devotional spirit which saw and felt the action of divine beings everywhere, with a strain of mystic enthusiasm in his soul to which the mysteries of the old cults and the practice of theurgic arts were full of fascination, Julian became when he reached manhood so possessed with the ideas of Greek mythology and philosophy that he could not accept Christianity. Homer gave him mythological ideas ; from Xenophon and Plato he learned ethical principles. Then Neo-Platonism laid hold of him, and transformed the myths of his childhood into vehicles of spiritual truth. Though he was trained in the Christian faith, it was by unworthy exponents, and at no friendly bidding. The consequence was that while he entered into the spirit of Hellenism and the Greek writings he looked at Christianity and the New Testament from the outside. The concealment of his religious views and his pretended acceptance of the Christian faith during ten long years must have done violence to his moral nature, and perhaps made him avow with the greater zeal, when the constraint was removed, his attachment to the worship of the old gods. He regarded himself as the instrument of Heaven for the regeneration of the world. Civilisation could be saved only by restoring the worship of those divinities through whose inspiration literature and art had been given to mankind, and by degrading that Galilean superstition in the advance of which he saw the death of culture. When he ascended the throne he reinstated the heathen priests in the privileges of which his predecessors had deprived them, enjoined upon the army and the civil servants of the crown attendance at the forsaken shrines, lavished large sums in sacri-

fices to every god of the Pantheon, and restored the heathen symbols on the coins and standards of the empire. If self-denial and zeal in performing the rites of a religion be adequate tests of a worshipper's sincerity, then was Julian sincere, for his life seemed one continual round of sacrifices, in which he himself used the knife and kindled the flames. No god or goddess was forgotten, but special homage was paid to Helios and to his outward symbol, the sun. The emperor attempted to infuse new life into heathenism by imposing new rules of conduct and ritual upon the priests, borrowing for the purpose almost every distinctive feature of the Christian priesthood and of the discipline of the Church. Preaching and chanting were instituted in the temples; and in imitation of 'the godless Galileans' he founded hospitals for the sick, for orphans, and for strangers without distinction of religion. In these innovations he unwittingly bore witness to the weakness of heathenism and the strength of Christianity.

In attempting to fulfil the second part of his self-imposed task, the subversion of Christianity, Julian was sagacious enough to deny the Church the glory of a new martyrdom, and though instances are not wanting in which violence to the Christians, resulting from popular tumult or from the misdirected zeal of subordinates, was winked at or condoned, yet so far as his edicts and his own personal commands were concerned, he kept true to his maxim that fire and sword cannot change a man's faith. Toleration of all sects was a motto befitting a philosopher, and he professed his willingness to exercise it towards all shades of Christian opinion, heretical and orthodox;

but he could scarcely be blind to the probable effect of allowing the return of the bishops and other clergy who had been banished in the Arian controversies, and in all likelihood he expected that thus the Church might be destroyed by internal strife. He did not scruple to employ trickery, if thereby he could entrap the weak. He surrounded his own statue with the emblems of idolatry that Christians might be compelled to bow before the gods when they offered the customary tribute of respect to the emperor. Refusal brought loss of office, while apostasy was liberally rewarded. He took special pains to corrupt the Christians in the army. At the reviews heathen symbols were paraded, and as the soldiers passed by, each of them, before he received from the hand of Julian a gift, proportioned to his rank and services, was expected to throw incense into the flame which burnt upon the altar. He wrote a book against Christianity, the drift of which may be gathered from a refutation of it by Cyril of Alexandria. We can now see that many of his charges are inapplicable to Christianity in itself, and that many were applicable only to that time, and have since ceased to be applicable in consequence of reformation from within. But to readers of the fourth century, unable to discriminate between the essence of the Christian system and the accidents of the time, the emperor's arguments, arrayed in no mean literary dress, must have appeared specially cogent from his manifest acquaintance with the Scriptures, and, although the work itself has perished, the fact that the refutation by which we know it was written after the lapse of seventy years, proves that the influence of these arguments was not short-lived.

But the most dangerous, and at the same time the most sagacious measure which Julian contrived against Christianity was his placing all the state schools under heathen teachers, and forbidding Christians to expound the works of the Greek writers. He alleged that it was an offence against public morals for men to make their living by expounding books the fundamental principles of which they disbelieved. Directly, this was a blow aimed at those who from their literary qualifications were the most influential on the side of Christianity, and who would be rendered powerless by being deprived of their livelihood. Indirectly, it would have had more serious consequences still, for if the children of the Christians were sent to the heathen schools they would imbibe polytheistic ideas, and if they were kept at home and deprived of a liberal education they would soon sink into ignorance and barbarism. In either case the measure bade fair to degrade, if not destroy, the Galilean superstition.

Julian failed in both branches of his enterprise. He found it impossible to breathe new life into a faith that was practically dead, and all his devices were powerless to quench the flame which Christ had kindled in the hearts of men. He made proselytes, no doubt, but none of them could he inspire with enthusiasm akin to his own. His zeal in sacrificing provoked the ridicule even of those who were heathens by birth. And he himself began to despair. A tone of disappointment pervades the letters written during the Persian war in which he lost his life. He felt that he was the defender of a dying cause, and that he too would be swept away. The conviction was

growing upon him that the carpenter's Son was busy 'making a coffin.' The mood of his last days is aptly expressed by the exclamation which Christian tradition attributes to his last hour—'Galilean, thou hast conquered.' Yet let it not be said that Julian lived in vain. It was well that the alliance between heathenism and philosophy should have a fair trial, for thereby heathens learned the more conclusively that their creed was doomed, and Christians became the more convinced that Christianity was the religion of the future.

The reaction which Julian represented was reversed at his death. The army which had been his special care showed its gratitude and its regard for his religious opinions by electing, albeit with heathen rites, Jovian, a zealous Christian, as his successor. How meagre had been Julian's success, and how firmly Christianity had planted itself in the great centres of population, may be gathered from the fact that within six years of his death the heathens are described in an imperial edict as pagans or inhabitants of the country districts. The heathens dreaded reprisals on the part of the Christians. The temples were closed, the priests hid themselves from fear, and no doubt in many instances the Christians were able to exact indemnities for their losses in Julian's reign, but upon the whole a policy of toleration to all religions was pursued by Jovian and his successors for nearly twenty years. This policy may be regarded as one of the beneficial results of Julian's reign, since a Christian emperor might be ashamed to be less tolerant than the Apostate had been, though it was doubtless due in part to the manifold dangers



from the inroads of the barbarians, for even a Christian emperor could not afford to treat with contumely those devotees who saw in the coming invasions the vengeance of the gods upon the Empire for having abandoned the ancestral faith. To the latter cause may also be traced the temporising of emperors who really wished to favour and further the Christian cause. Gratian, for example, did not hesitate to command his father's apotheosis, and a court poet was permitted to celebrate this act as a signal mark of filial piety. Even his own name was associated with the ancient divinities in a panegyric pronounced by a famous sophist of the time, and the Christian emperor inhaled without disgust the incense of this profane flattery by his heathen subject. But such temporising could not last long. The Church was growing in strength and influence, and so soon as a lull in the storm from the north occurred by Theodosius defeating the Goths, Ambrose, bishop of Milan, and trusted adviser of Gratian, saw an opportunity of advancing the Church from the platform of religious equality before the law to that of superiority and of exclusive support by the state. He used his influence with the court both to damage Paganism in its material interests and to shock the sentiments that were dearest to it. Under his advice Gratian in 382 seized upon the endowments of the temples, and revoked the privileges of the heathen priesthoods; he swept away the institution of the Vestal Virgins, on whose purity the salvation of the empire, in the eyes of the Pagans, was believed to depend; he refused to put on the robe of the Pontifex Maximus, although he inconsistently retained the title; and he

removed from the Roman Senate-house the altar and statue of Victory, the pledge and visible sign of Rome's conquering power, before which the senators had been accustomed to take the oath of office. A movement was set on foot in Rome to remonstrate against these measures. Many of the senators were heathens, and the most illustrious Roman families still adhered to the old religion. A deputation headed by Symmachus, the chief of the senate, and one of the most celebrated orators of the day, went to Milan for the purpose of inducing the emperor to reverse the obnoxious decrees. But the majority of the senate being Christians felt the removal of the heathen emblems to be a relief to their consciences, and brought influence to bear upon Gratian through the bishops of Rome and Milan, with the result that Symmachus and his followers were refused an audience. A famine which broke out next year and a mutiny in which Gratian was killed, were regarded by the Pagans as a fitting retribution for his obstinacy in pursuing a sacrilegious course. In 384 Symmachus, who had meanwhile been made prefect of Rome, again appeared at the imperial court, thinking that the stripling Valentinian II. would be easily persuaded, by the disasters which had overtaken his brother, to comply with a demand for the restoration of the altar and statue of Victory. But the influence of Ambrose was still in the ascendant, and he was willing to meet the defenders of the old faith upon their own ground. A copy of the speech of Symmachus was supplied to Ambrose beforehand, and he prepared a reply. Then the two orators appeared before the court to plead the cause of their respective faiths. Heathenism and

Christianity met face to face to do battle with one another in logical fence and in the power of the spoken word. The Christians could afford to preserve the speeches on both sides. They form a curious monument of the time, showing that neither side was distinctly conscious wherein its strength lay. Symmachus asserted that the gods had ever accorded protection to the Roman state, granted the possibility of there being One Supreme Being, but appealed to time-honoured usage in favour of the worship of many, maintained that the emperor, whatever his own personal belief might be, was bound to preserve intact the institutions of the country, and by a bold figure introduced Rome herself to plead for her ancient divinities as the source of her wisdom and her power throughout the centuries of her victorious past. Ambrose, on his side, maintained that the prosperity of Rome in the past had been due to the courage and virtues of her sons, and not to the power of her divinities, and showed that on many critical occasions she had been abandoned by the gods. The plea of antiquity at once collapsed when he pointed out that Rome had during the preceding four centuries admitted to the Pantheon and to equal honours with the old gods innumerable divinities from every region of the world. It was a piece of clever dialectic on the one side and on the other, and but for the ring of conviction which is heard in the Christian reply, the two compositions might be put upon a level. That Symmachus should throughout be calm, artistic, a cultured pagan, is what we expect; but the modern student of the Christian evidences is disappointed to find that Ambrose at such a crisis

had no word to say on the moral bearings of the question, that he never dreamed of pointing to the practical results of Christianity in purifying the heart and sanctifying the life, and that he had no thought of contrasting the Christian ideal of conduct with the routine of venerable custom lauded by his opponent. Victory, as some one has said, declared for her enemy and not for her champion ; the statue was not restored to its ancient place of honour. It was the first open defeat of paganism, and it was the beginning of the end.

Seven years later an incident occurred in Alexandria which dramatically represents the next stage in the conflict between Christianity and Paganism. Theodosius, a Spaniard, had obtained the empire of the East, and having come under the influence of Ambrose during a visit to Italy, he sought to give the death-blow to heathenism by a series of penal enactments. The practice of magic and the inspection of the entrails of animals were made capital offences ; sacrifices, even in private houses, were prohibited ; the temples were closed, and any attempt to frequent them for purposes of worship was punished with a heavy fine. Crowds of fanatical monks, often with impunity, went beyond the letter of the law and destroyed the heathen temples with the images of the gods. Thus perished the finest works of Greek art and what might have been interesting monuments of the past, for all artistic and archæological considerations were overborne by the belief of the Christians, especially of the monks, that the gods were demons, and that their evil influence could be effectually counteracted only by demolishing their abodes. Theophilus, bishop of Alexandria, an unscrupulous and

violent man, had obtained permission to erect a Christian church on the site of a temple dedicated originally to Osiris and subsequently to Dionysus. In digging the foundation for the new edifice the symbols of the impure worship chanced to be found, and were exposed by Theophilus with more zeal than modesty to the derision of the mob in the streets. A riot ensued, and many Christians were killed. The Pagans betook themselves to the temple of Serapis, where they were safe from attack, and whence they made frequent sallies into the streets of the city, carrying back with them into the hated edifice Christians, to be forced by torture to sacrifice or to be slain upon the idolatrous altar. The military authorities, feeling themselves powerless to quell the disturbance, reported the state of the city to the emperor. Theodosius, while ordering clemency to be shown to the rioters on the ground that it was not meet to exact vengeance for the blood of those who had obtained the martyr's crown, commanded that the idolatrous temples of Alexandria should be razed to the ground, and that the images of the gods should be destroyed. This was better news than even Theophilus could have expected, for it afforded him the opportunity of laying in the dust one of the proudest monuments of heathenism, and of shattering an idol around which had gathered the superstitions of twenty generations. When the contents of the imperial rescript were made known, the Pagans laid down their arms and fled, and Theophilus in his triumphant zeal hastened with the help of the military to fulfil the emperor's command. They ascended the steps of the Serapeum ; they entered the deserted sanctuary ; they stood awe-

struck before the colossal statue of the Nile-god, whose outstretched arms touched the opposite walls of the temple; their eyes were dazzled with the gleam of inlaid precious stones; their thoughts were busy with the prophecy which had been believed for centuries, that with the downfall of the image would come the crash of heaven and earth. The possibility of this prophecy coming true made even the Christians pause, but ere the wavering courage of the mob gave way, a soldier, instigated by Theophilus, cleft the idol with his battle-axe. The helpless image offered no resistance; the sacrilegious assailant trod the pavement unharmed by the vengeance of the god. A second blow sent the head rolling on the floor; out of the hollow carcase rushed a colony of affrighted rats, and the mystery of centuries was exploded in a shout of derisive laughter. When the fragments of the image were dragged through the streets, even the Pagans, it is said, joined in insulting their unresisting god. The temple itself, which had been erected by Alexander the Great, or by the first Ptolemy, and which combined the colossal grandeur of Egyptian with the harmonious proportions of Greek art, was demolished to the foundations. Immediately afterwards occurred a fresh instance of that vacillation which, as we have seen, marked the faith of both Christian and Pagan at that time. A belief, fed by the lingering terrors of the victorious Christians, and by the hopes of the defeated heathen, spread throughout the land that Serapis would avenge the insult done to his image and his shrine by withholding the overflow of the Nile. As the accustomed time for the inundation

drew on, anxiety took possession of the minds of all. The day passed and the river remained at its usual level. Day after day men eagerly watched for the rising of the waters, and saw on the parched banks of the Nile, visions of coming famine. It seemed as if the offended deity, by withholding his fertilising influence from Egypt, the granary of Constantinople, were bent upon punishing the impious monarch through hunger and revolution in his capital. The people indignantly demanded that the god should be propitiated by rites and sacrifices ; the prefect, dreading a general insurrection and an outbreak of the Pagans, again appealed to the emperor for instructions. His answer showed as little disposition to make terms with idolatry as before, but ere it arrived the Nile had risen, and in the succeeding months a harvest more abundant than usual covered the land. Many conversions followed these events, but it would be a mistake to lay much stress upon such acquisitions, for Pagans, when they passed into the Church, found multitudes already there who believed in the existence of the gods as living beings, and in the efficacy of idolatrous rites ; and though they learned to call the gods demons, and to regard the ancient ceremonies as magical and perilous to the soul, their faith was at best a compromise between Christianity and heathenism.

After the death of Theodosius, the Goths, who had been kept in check by the terror of his name, burst their barriers and swarmed over the whole of south-eastern Europe. They were impelled, no doubt, by the lust of conquest, but having been converted to Christianity by the missionary zeal of Ulphilas, they

also believed themselves to be Heaven's instruments for executing vengeance upon the empire which had so long played fast and loose with idolatry. The emperors had made stringent laws against Paganism, and from motives of state policy had too often let them remain dead letters on the statute-book. But the barbarians were hampered by no such scruples; the richer the shrine, the more attractive was the booty, and the more righteous the work of destruction. They spared neither altar nor temple; sanctuaries like that of Eleusis, before which the Christians of the south were filled with reverential awe, the heritage of centuries of mystery, were despoiled of their treasures and trodden under foot. Italy too was attacked; Rome was besieged and taken. Alaric consented to retire only on condition that an enormous ransom should be paid. To furnish the sum demanded, the Romans had to give up their most precious heirlooms, including idols of gold and silver, but it was expressly stipulated by the barbarians, that the sacred vessels of no Christian church should pass into the melting-pot. More than a thousand families of senatorial rank, the chief remaining supporters of paganism, were ruined and dispersed. The rest of Italy, Gaul, Spain, and Africa, were invaded and ravaged in turn, and everywhere the barbarians were as zealous in the destruction of idolatry as in the overthrow of the empire.

Though Paganism was thus outwardly weakened, the very violence which destroyed it furnished one of the most powerful arguments in its favour. The prevalence of that argument, and the fact that Christian apologists felt bound to offer an elaborate



answer, are among the most striking proofs that even Christian minds were deeply imbued with Pagan modes of thought, and habitually took a Pagan view of the world. The Christians of the type and of the time of Constantine had not hesitated to attribute his victories to the magic virtue of the cross upon his standard; their successors in the days of Julian were not slow to ascribe the troubles which then disturbed the outskirts of the empire to his apostasy and his restoration of heathen rites. The Pagans had all along seen in the approaching disintegration and decay a just retribution sent by the gods upon the faithless race of men. As the insults to the gods became more frequent the storm-clouds of threatened invasion grew blacker and darker. A heathen historian traces the origin of the calamities which he records to the abolition of sacrifice by Theodosius, and the sack of Rome to the laws against the ancient faith passed by his son. This objection of the heathens that the overthrow of idolatry and the ascendancy of Christianity were the cause of the misfortunes of the empire was so wide-spread, and had such force with those, both Pagans and Christians, who conceived history to be the outcome of magical or demonic powers, that Augustine devoted twelve years of his life to its refutation. His treatise, *De Civitate Dei*, was begun in 413, and was not finished till 426, within four years of his death. Rome had once been taken; society, consumed by inward corruption, was shaken to its foundations by the violent onset of the Teutonic tribes; men's hearts were failing them for fear; the voice of calumny cried aloud, and laid these woes to the charge of the Christian faith. Augustine

undertook to refute the calumny, and to restore the courage of his fellow-Christians. Taking a rapid survey of history, he asks what the gods had ever done for the well-being of the state or for public morality. He maintains that the greatness of Rome in the past was due to the virtues of her sons, and not to the protection of the gods. He shows that, long before the rise of Christianity, her ruin had begun with the introduction of foreign vices after the destruction of Carthage, and declares that much in the ancient worship, instead of preventing, had hastened that ruin. He rises above the troubles of the present, and amid the vanishing glories of the city of men he proclaims the stability of the city of God. At a time when the downfall of Rome was thought to presage approaching doom, Augustine regarded the disasters around him as the birth-throes of a new world, as a necessary moment in the onward movement of Christianity. Dualistic though its fundamental conception be, the work is remarkable as being one of the earliest attempts to construct a philosophy of history, and both in its plan and in its execution it worthily closes the literary conflict which the Church had to wage against heathenism.

II. DEVELOPMENT.—For illustrations of the process of development, I have to ask your attention to the constitution and creed of the Church, and to the modifications which they underwent during the period under review.

1. *Constitution and Government.*—The germs of this development are to be found in the preceding period. Various causes were at work tending to consolidate the Church. The schisms and heresies of

the second and third centuries, the persecutions before the time of Constantine, and the outward prosperity consequent upon the favour of the emperor, had, in different ways, helped to bring into prominence the idea of her corporate unity. And to the men of that age the visible Church was the only possible form of this idea. To be a humble follower of Christ, to aspire after a life of holiness through faith in the Saviour and out of love to Him, to have that consecration to God in which consists the priesthood of every believer, would have been regarded as valueless without participation in the rites and ceremonies of the visible Church. Cyprian's famous comparison of the Church to the Ark, out of which safety from the flood was impossible, shows how much importance was attached in the third century to outward connection with the Church, and as time advances we find greater stress laid upon it. Especially in Augustine do we meet with the most uncompromising statements of the peril attaching to those who remained outside. In the visible Church a man was at least within reach of salvation ; out of it there could be no hope.

As the idea of the Church gained in importance the spiritual power with which the Church is invested was concentrated more and more in the clergy. So long as the Church was kept pure by persecution, so long as a vigorous Christian life was diffused among its members—so long, in short, as the visible and the invisible Church were approximately co-extensive—unity of sentiment was possible without external constraint ; but when the Church, after the days of Constantine, came to include many who professed Christianity without being animated by its spirit, it

was found that unity among such diverse elements could be preserved only by bringing to bear upon them some external authority, and this authority naturally fell into the hands of the clergy. This increase of power led to a widening of the gulf between the clergy and the laity, favoured the growth of the idea that those in holy orders possessed a mediatorial character as the channels of the Spirit's influence, threw into the background the principle of primitive Christianity which asserted the universal priesthood of believers, and converted the clergy into a priesthood in many respects resembling that of the Old Dispensation. In the light of this separation between the clergy and the laity, the importance attached to the rite of ordination becomes intelligible. It is a remarkable characteristic of this period, that not seldom was the sacerdotal office forced upon a reluctant layman. Ambrose, for instance, entered public life as an advocate, and was appointed governor of the district to which Milan belonged. When the bishopric became vacant by the death of Auxentius, and popular feeling between the Arians and the Catholics ran so high that a riot at the election was feared, Ambrose, in discharge of his duty as a magistrate, hastened to the church, and in the interests of peace began to address the contending factions. His eloquence subdued the clamour, and there was silence in the crowd. Suddenly, during an impressive pause made by the orator, the shrill treble of a child's voice was heard, and the words, 'Ambrose is bishop,' rang through the church. The crowd took up the cry, and, forgetting their divisions, demanded his consecration. In vain the governor protested that

he was unqualified, not having been baptized; in vain he resorted subsequently to the most extraordinary devices to convince the people that he was ineligible on moral as well as on ecclesiastical grounds. At length, obliged to yield to their solicitations, he was forthwith baptized, and eight days afterwards was ordained Bishop of Milan. The case of Synesius, Bishop of Ptolemais, is still stronger. He had been a disciple of Hypatia in Alexandria, and openly avowed certain Neo-Platonist tenets; he declared himself unfit for the spiritual office because of his disbelief in the resurrection and other Christian doctrines, and because of his attachment to enjoyments denied to the clergy. His spiritual father, Theophilus, insisted upon his consecration, and prevailed. Now the point deserving notice in these and similar cases, as marking the prevalent sentiment of the time, is the conviction entertained by the people that the rite of ordination would remove all scruples and do away with all unfitness. And those who were thus, as it were by compulsion, ordained, showed that they also shared this conviction by the unhesitating way in which they wielded the spiritual power put into their hands. The line which separated the clergy from the laity was made more manifest by the privileges belonging to the former in the matter of church discipline, and by the immunities accorded to them by imperial legislation. None of the clergy could be subjected to public penance or to excommunication. The utmost penalty that could be inflicted was deposition; but the offender was still admitted to communion with the laity. The only exception I find to this general rule is contained

in the seventh canon of the Council of Chalcedon, which subjects to excommunication any cleric who serves in war or enters a secular calling ; and the exception is noteworthy, as proving how heinous appeared the offence of obliterating the sharply-drawn line between the clergy and the laity. On the other hand, ecclesiastics were exempted from most of the public burdens, from such obligatory services as the holding of expensive municipal offices, and from many oppressive taxes. They could not, like ordinary witnesses, be examined by torture in a court of justice. In certain cases, a priest, when accused, could insist on being tried, not by laymen, but by his peers. Further, the right of jurisdiction was conferred upon the bishops in the case of lighter offences committed by the clergy, in the case of a quarrel between two ecclesiastics, or in the case of a dispute between an ecclesiastic and a layman, should the latter give his consent. Thus the arbitration to which the faithful of the early Church had voluntarily submitted, received a legal sanction, and in the end of the fourth century such episcopal decrees were declared to be final. The privilege of interceding with the secular power on behalf of criminals or others, which had belonged to the heathen priests, was transferred to the bishops, and was the means on the one hand of curbing despotism, and on the other of exalting the spiritual power. This separation between the two classes in the Church naturally expressed itself by means of external signs. Clerical costume, white during divine service, black at other times, became fashionable, nay imperative ; while the different orders of the clergy, bishops, pres-

byters, deacons, were also in like manner distinguished from each other. Not only were the clergy marked off from the laity, but the bishops were pre-eminent among the favoured order, being regarded by all as the teachers and lawgivers of the Church, and as the channels through whom the faithful might become partakers of the gifts of the Spirit. The episcopal insignia, the ring, the crosier, and the pallium betokened this pre-eminence, while each symbol had its own significance.

Another feature which distinguishes this period is the gradual concentration of episcopal power in a few hands. From the beginning, precedence had been accorded by the spontaneous sentiment of the Church to the bishops of such apostolic sees as Jerusalem, Antioch, Rome, and it was inevitable after the time of Constantine that the influence of the bishops who ruled over the churches of the great cities of the empire, and who were presumably men of exceptional ability, should increase as time went on. Gradually the country bishops were abolished, their places being taken by presbyters or visitors, while the supervision of the churches was handed over to the bishop in the nearest city. To the bishops of the great cities, called metropolitans in the East and archbishops in the West, was given the oversight of the other bishops in their provinces; to them also were assigned certain duties and privileges in regard to ordination and the summoning of provincial synods. Above the metropolitans towered the patriarchs, who, in their turn, had greater privileges and more extensive powers. In 325 the Council of Nicæa recognised the pre-eminence of three metropolitans, and placed

them in the following order in respect to rank, the bishop of Rome first, that of Alexandria second, and that of Antioch third. In 451 the Council of Chalcedon, notwithstanding the protest of the papal legates, confirmed the action of the Council of Constantinople held seventy years before, and placed Constantinople or New Rome next after or alongside of Old Rome, and added Jerusalem, making five patriarchates in all.

It is impossible for us to trace here the history in detail ; we must content ourselves with calling attention to the general tendency which is observable throughout this period. The laity drop out of account ; the inferior clergy succumb to the bishops ; the bishops, in their turn, succumb to the patriarchs ; and in the end, the chief power having centred in the three leading sees, Constantinople, Alexandria, and Rome, the struggles of the three great bishops for supremacy point to the coming separation of the Eastern from the Western Church, and to the consolidation of the Papal power.

In opposition to this tendency towards monarchical rule in the Church, the tendency in early Christianity towards a republican, or at least a representative form of government, asserted itself, and attained to a fuller development than was possible before the state had taken the Church under its protection. I allude to the Councils, which are a remarkable feature of this period. More than a hundred and fifty of these assemblies were held within a century and a half ; and though Gregory of Nazianzus speaks disparagingly of them, yet they were a protest against the tendency towards oligarchy, and kept alive, at least in semblance, the idea that truth may be reached through discussion.



It is to be noted that the supreme power in any district of the Church was lodged, not in the bishops individually, but in the assembled bishops. So also the supreme power in the Church itself had not passed into the hands of the patriarchs or the Pope, but was vested in the œcumenical councils which became possible after the accession of Constantine, and of which there were four in this period. The first met at Nicæa in 325; the second at Constantinople in 381; the third at Ephesus in 431; and the fourth at Chalcedon in 451. It will be observed that these œcumenical councils were all held in the Eastern portion of the Empire, doubtless owing to the residence of the emperor in that quarter, yet it cannot escape notice that the absence of such assemblies from the West favoured the concentration of the chief ecclesiastical power in the bishop of Rome.

2. *Creed and Doctrine.*—From the days of Aristotle downwards, the difference between the speculative East and the practical West has often been remarked. The philosophers of Greece discussed questions concerning God, the universe, the beginning of things; those of Rome asked wherein virtue consists, and where the highest good is to be found. The same difference shows itself in the doctrinal tendencies of the Eastern and the Western Church. The former occupied itself with questions regarding the Godhead and the Person of Christ; the latter with the condition of man, the origin of sin, and the means of salvation. The heresy of Arius, of Nestorius, of Eutyches, in the East; and that of Pelagius in the West, mark the stages of doctrinal discussion which fall within this period. In the East the course of development and

the affiliation of doctrines are clear. All the controversies circle round the Person of Christ. The formula in use from the earliest times, by which believers were baptized into the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, contains on the one hand the idea of the unity of the Godhead, and on the other that of the distinction of persons therein. Stress might be laid on the unity to the neglect of the plurality, or on the plurality to the neglect of the unity. In the former case the Christian faith ran the risk of being thrown back upon the isolated or the blank unity of Judaism or of philosophic speculation ; in the latter it was in danger of relapsing into the polytheism from which most of its confessors had just been rescued. In the evolution of thought both these tendencies manifested themselves. Sabellius, in the third century, emphasised the idea of unity, making the three only the modes of manifestation in which the one energy expressed itself ; the Church, in opposition to this, maintained the distinction of persons in the Godhead. Arius emphasised this distinction, and proceeded to argue, from the relation of Fatherhood and Sonship, that the Father must have existed before the Son ; that therefore once the Son was not ; that consequently He was made, like all creatures, of a substance that had not previously existed. Further, he asserted that the Son of God was the first of creatures, and in that sense the Only-begotten ; that He was created after the image of the Divine Wisdom, and therefore called the Word ; and that He was created in order that by His means God might create all things. Yet Arius continued to maintain the divinity of Christ. In this assertion of a created and

inferior Godhead lay the strength and vitality of Arianism for that age of the world. Only in the transition stage from polytheism to Christianity could such a self-destructive system have taken so great a hold upon the minds of the populace ; only in the age which produced the emperor Julian with his theory of a supreme god and subordinate divinities, equally entitled to worship, could Arianism have spread as it did among the educated. The Council of Nicæa declared the Son to be of the same substance with the Father, yet for more than half a century Arianism had crowds of adherents, and at times it seemed as if it would gain the victory. The vehemence with which the orthodox under the leadership of Athanasius contended against doctrines apparently so far removed from practical life, becomes intelligible only when we learn from their writings that the faithful clearly perceived that any concession to Arianism would be a concession to polytheism, and a virtual surrender of Christianity.

The true and proper Divinity of our Lord being thus established, the next question that arose concerned the relation between His divine and His human nature. On this subject two opposite errors were possible, and both found advocates. Nestorius, patriarch of Constantinople, maintained that the Virgin Mary was not the Mother of God. He therefore kept the two natures so much apart as virtually to make the Son of God and the Son of Man two persons. This view was condemned by the Council of Ephesus in 431. Eutyches, chief of a monastery near Constantinople, fell into the opposite extreme. He emphasised so strongly the unity of the person,

that he lost sight of the two natures. This error in turn was condemned by the Council of Chalcedon in terms which the Westminster Confession has reproduced, declaring 'that two whole, perfect, and distinct natures, the Godhead and the Manhood, were inseparably joined together in one person, without conversion, composition, or confusion.'

In opposition to the heresy of Pelagius were laid down, chiefly through the instrumentality of Augustine, the Church doctrines of original sin, predestination, and grace.

It will have been observed that in answer to each of the Eastern heresies the Church formulated the orthodox doctrine through an œcumenical Council, but the overthrow of Pelagianism in the West was procured in a different and noteworthy fashion. Pelagius had been acquitted by a Council held at Diospolis in Palestine. At this the African bishops were alarmed, and appealed to Pope Innocent I., beseeching that 'as God had favoured him with such exceeding honour, and placed him in the Apostolic Chair, he would, in the present great danger of the Church, show his faithfulness as a shepherd, and hinder the spreading of the Pelagian errors.' In his answer the Pope confirmed the sentence of excommunication against Pelagius, taking care at the same time to magnify the dignity of the Roman see, and to point out the advantage of such a supreme tribunal. The African bishops saw the blunder they had made, for two years later a General Council at Carthage enacted that whoever of the inferior clergy 'appeals to a court on the other side of the sea, may not again be received into communion by any one in Africa.'

Under this head, had space permitted, some account would have been given of the growth of the Christian literature of this period, of the great writers and preachers, and of the opposing schools of interpretation which divided Christendom.

In the Eastern Church we should have had to notice Eusebius of Cæsarea, the father of Church History and the friend of Constantine ; Ephrem the Syrian, the poet-preacher ; the three Cappadocians, Basil of Cæsarea, Gregory of Nyssa, and Gregory of Nazianzus, each great in his own way, the first as a preacher and administrator, the second as a thinker, the third as a poet and panegyrist ; Chrysostom, the orator and exegete ; Theodore of Mopsuestia and Theodoret of Kyros, along with Chrysostom the most influential representatives of the School of Antioch. In the Western Church we should have had to speak of Ambrose, the eloquent preacher and voluminous writer ; of Jerome, the biblical critic ; and of Augustine, the philosopher and controversialist, whose thoughts live among us even at the present day.

III. COMPROMISE.—Illustrations of the process of Compromise are found in the relaxed morality of the members of the Church, and in the Pagan rites imported into Christian worship. When the Roman Emperors took Christianity into favour, it became an advantage to be counted a Christian, and hence multitudes flocked into the Church, bringing with them heathen notions and heathen practices. No doubt the Church did her best to make them worthy of the name they bore ; and the amelioration of the Roman laws, the social reforms which were accomplished, and the spread of Christian ideas and senti-

ments, prove that her efforts were not altogether vain. On the other hand the Church herself became contaminated with the pollutions of Pagan vice. Of this deterioration of morals we have abundant evidence. Read the Canons of the various Councils, and you will learn that the Church found it necessary to prohibit the commission of the most heinous and abominable crimes not only by the laity, but even by the clergy. Read the homilies of such preachers as Chrysostom, Basil, and Gregory, and you may infer what the moral tone of a Christian congregation must have been to which such reproofs could be addressed. Read, above all, the treatise on Providence, or *De Gubernatione Dei*, written at the close of our period by Salvian, a presbyter of Marseilles. The barbarians had overspread the West, and Christians had suffered so many hardships that they began to doubt whether there was any Divine government of human affairs. Salvian retorted that the fact of their suffering was the best evidence of the doctrine of Providence, for the miseries they endured were the effects of the Divine displeasure provoked by the debauchery of the Church. And then he proceeds to draw up an indictment and to lead proof which I prefer not to give in detail. After making every allowance for rhetorical exaggeration, enough remains to show that the morality of the Church had grievously declined, and that the declension was due to the inroads of Pagan vice.

So soon as Christianity became the religion of the state, many of the rites and ceremonies of heathenism found their way into the Church. We have seen that throughout this period men's minds vacillated between Christianity and polytheism. When half-

converts pressed into the Church, their polytheistic notions were not left behind, but showed themselves whenever opportunity offered. Thus is explained the extraordinary outburst of martyr-worship which characterised this period. Accustomed to the worship of the dead as demigods or heroes, those who were still Pagans at heart easily transformed the veneration which the Christians had been wont to pay to the martyrs into a polytheistic cult. Believing that the departed spirit hovered near the dead body, they erected chapels over the martyrs' graves. There prayers for help of all kinds were offered, for protection on a journey, for deliverance from danger, for the recovery of stolen goods ; there too vows of offerings were made, and votive tablets were hung up when the desired boon was obtained. There the sick passed the night hoping for enlightenment in a dream as to the means of cure, just as had been done in the temples of Esculapius. These divine honours were not rendered to the saints according to the rank which they might be supposed to hold in the heavenly world, but in accordance with heathen custom each town or village took some local worthy for its patron saint, and only as the system developed was the celestial hierarchy formed. Another remarkable instance of the power of polytheistic feeling lingering within the Church is to be seen in the honour paid to the Virgin. The heathens of many lands had worshipped under various names a female goddess who was often called the mother of the gods and represented the principle of fertility. Such was Isis to the Egyptians, Diana to the Ephesians, Cybele to the Phrygians, and the Bona Dea to the Romans.

It is striking to find that Ephesus, the shrine of the many-breasted Diana, was the place at which a Christian council decreed to Mary the epithet 'Mother of God,' and the story goes that the people burst into tears of joy when their favourite goddess was given back to them in a new and more attractive form. From that time her worship spread with marvellous rapidity to most of the centres in which her prototypes had received honour. Pagan temples hitherto closed against Christ were thrown open and dedicated to her. In Sicily shortly after the council of Ephesus no fewer than eight temples, including that of Venus Erycina familiar to readers of Horace, of Ceres at Catania, and of Minerva at Syracuse, were consecrated to the worship of Mary.

IV. PURIFICATION.—Unfortunately there is little to say under this fourth head. One of the most noteworthy phenomena of that age is the growth of the monastic system. To have traced the lights and shades of monastic life would have been an interesting task, but I must content myself with pointing out that although asceticism had its roots in the previous centuries, yet its rapid spread immediately after the Church's period of outward prosperity began cannot be regarded as an accident. It was a revolt against the worldliness which had penetrated even into the sanctuary. It arose out of the urgent need felt by contemplative minds to disengage themselves from the dissipation and corruption of contemporary society. Monasticism was at best a doubtful remedy, but it was perhaps the only one that the times permitted ; and we in this age of hurry and bustle amid our fevered pursuit of comfort would do well to



remember that many of the men whose thoughts moulded the succeeding centuries, Basil and Chrysostom and Jerome and Augustine, came forth from the meditative calm of the cloister to accomplish their work in the world in the midst of fasting and prayer. The other instance of compromise to which I drew attention, viz., the infusion of polytheistic ideas into Christian worship, also evoked a protest, although in this case the protest was by no means so emphatic. The great writers and preachers occasionally warned those under their care against the idolatrous leaven in their worship, declaring that God only is to be adored, but it must be confessed that their warnings were of the mildest while their rhetoric was oftentimes misleading. The truth is that they were willing to concede a good deal to heathen feeling, if thereby they could secure the triumph of the Church; and when we read the bitter invectives of Jerome against Vigilantius for having denounced the worship of saints and relics as superstition and idolatry, we see the fate which awaited opposition to the time-serving policy of the ecclesiastical leaders.

A superficial and cynical view of history might lead one to say that things have gone from bad to worse during the whole period under review. It might be said that in the conflict between Christianity and heathenism the vanquished has done more than bruise the heel of the victor; that in the development of doctrine the wrangling of contending factions and the subtleties of intellectual discussion have produced their usual fruit in a divorce between religion and morality; and that the simple worship of early Christianity has become overloaded with usages from

Jewish and Heathen sources. And if all this be traced, as doubtless it may be, to the alliance between Church and State, a modern controversialist would perhaps be led to see in it a proof from experience that the State-church system carries in it the seeds of evil. I shall have failed in my purpose if I have not showed you that the State of those days was the outcome of a heathen civilisation and was heathen to the core, and hence that no fair analogy can be drawn between such an alliance as we have described and an alliance of the Church with a State which is itself the outgrowth of Christian civilisation. But let us not leave the subject without glancing at it from a higher point of view. Notwithstanding the many evils which premature union with the State brought upon the Church, it was a good thing for the world at large that Christianity became at that time the recognised religion of the empire. Heathenism at its best was worse than the degraded Christianity which took its place. It was therefore a distinct gain to civilised mankind that the Crucified One and no longer Jupiter or Bacchus, that the Virgin and no longer Cybele or Venus, should be enshrined as the ideals of the race. We may take a wider view still. The Roman empire had become corrupt and needed regeneration by the infusion of new blood. Providence had provided for this renewal by setting in motion the migrations of the barbarous tribes. Had these tribes on their arrival found heathenism in possession of the field, had they found the temples open and the gods worshipped, the rude conquerors would doubtless, in accordance with the ordinary law of history, have adopted the culture and worship

## 112 *Church of the Fourth and Fifth Centuries.*

of the conquered, and thus polytheism might have obtained a new lease of life. But when they arrived they found Christianity established and institutions ostensibly Christian everywhere. At the same time came a great revival of the missionary spirit in the Church, especially among the monks. In due time the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven, which had been hid from the wise and prudent of heathenism and had failed to permeate the Græco-Roman civilisation, were revealed to the ruder and less sophisticated conquerors. Upon the decaying and corrupt Roman Empire came down two invading armies, unlike in their aims, but each contributing to the same result, —on the one hand the barbarians destroying what was unfit to live, on the other the missionary monks breathing new life wherever they went. From their joint efforts arose the middle age, the cradle of our modern world.

*Authorities consulted.*—Chastel, *Histoire de Christianisme*. Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*. Herzog, *Abriss der Kirchengeschichte*. Baur, *Die christliche Kirche*. Ritter, *Handbuch der Kirchengeschichte*. Hasse, *Kirchengeschichte*. Hefele, *History of the Church Councils*. De Broglie, *L'église et l'empire romain au quatrième siècle*. Merivale, *Early Church History*. Stanley, *Eastern Church*. Milman, *History of Christianity*. Taylor, *Ancient Christianity*. Villemain, *Tableau de l'éloquence chrétienne au quatrième siècle*. Naville, *Julien l'Apostat*. Rendall, *The Emperor Julian*.



# ST. GILES' LECTURES.

*FOURTH SERIES—THE CHURCHES OF CHRISTENDOM.*

## *LECTURE IV.*

### THE GREEK CHURCH.

By the REV. JAMES CAMERON LEES, D.D., Minister of St. Giles' Cathedral, and one of Her Majesty's Chaplains.

THERE are few travellers in Europe who have not been impressed by a sense of the overshadowing power everywhere of the Church of Rome. Her grand cathedrals, her magnificent and imposing ritual, meet him wherever he goes, and even in those countries where the people have in great measure disowned her power, and left her churches deserted, she stands like the pyramids, a magnificent solid and well compacted structure, beside which all other organisations seem insignificant and ephemeral. But when he turns his face eastwards, he finds that there is another sun in the ecclesiastical firmament. When he crosses the Italian or German frontier, and travels in Russia, or Greece, or Syria, he is confronted with a Church which in its ritual, its splendid temples, the devotion of its adherents, is in some respects no less wonderful than that which he has

left behind. The Eastern Church is equally worthy of study with the Roman, whether we consider its history, the extraordinary character of its worship, or its influence over the religious life of its followers. It has the adherence of eighty-four millions, to whom it is the sole representative of Christianity. 'Extending herself from the sea of Okhotsk to the palaces of Venice, from the ice-fields that grind against the Sloveksy Monastery, to the burning jungles of Malabar; embracing a thousand languages and nations and tongues, but binding them together in the golden link of the same faith; offering the tremendous sacrifice in a hundred liturgies, but offering it to the same God, and with the same rites; fixing her patriarchal thrones in the same cities as when the disciples were first called Christians at Antioch, and James, the brother of the Lord, finished his course at Jerusalem; oppressed by the devotees of the false prophet, as once by the worshippers of false gods; she is now, as she was from the beginning, multiplex in her arrangements, simple in her faith, difficult of comprehension to strangers, easily intelligible to her sons, widely scattered in her branches, hardly beset by her enemies, yet still and evermore what she delights to call herself, Holy Catholic Apostolic.' So has written one who knew the Eastern Church well, and who is almost carried away by his fervid imagination of her polity and practice. But even though we may not allow ourselves to be so carried away, and may look at the object of his admiration with calmer and less dispassionate minds, we must feel that this Church is one in which we should take an intelligent interest, and

which cannot be overlooked in any study of 'The Creeds of Christendom.'

It has been the lot of the lecturer to attend the worship of the Greek Church in many lands, and under diverse circumstances. In the great Church of the Kremlin at Moscow, and in that of the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem; in the Cathedral of Athens, and the convent of Mount Sinai; at Nazareth and Damascus, and in many a humble church and monastery throughout Turkey, and especially throughout the Holy Land;—for him there has always been a singular charm in its romantic history and semi-barbaric splendours, while the kindness he has received in his wanderings from both its priests and people, perhaps predispose him to look even upon its great shortcomings with a more kindly eye than one would do who knew of them only by the reports of others. It is difficult for any one of Western training and education to enter thoroughly into the Oriental mind, and in nothing is this more true than in regard to religious faith and worship, in which the symbolism, mysticism, and other characteristics of the Eastern so freely find expression. It is indeed a feeling that most who have attended for some time the services of the Greek Church have experienced, that on entering a Roman or Latin Church and listening to its service, they have almost felt at home, so much more conformed to our ideas is the Latin Church which bears a Western impress, than the Greek which is wholly the expression of the Eastern mind. Let any one attend the service, for instance, of any great church in Russia, and he will feel how far removed it is from anything in the nature

of worship among ourselves. The services of Seville or the Vatican have more affinity with our usages even in Scotland, than those of the Kremlin or Troitsa.

The Greek Church, or, as it calls itself, the Holy Orthodox, Catholic, Apostolic, Oriental Church, has a venerable if not an eventful history. Unlike the Church of the West, it has not been moulded by great political movements, the rise and fall of kingdoms, and the convulsions which have passed over the face of modern society. Its course has been out of the sight of European civilisation, it has grown up amid peoples who have been but slightly affected, if they have been affected at all, by the progressive movements of mankind. It has no middle ages. It has no renaissance. It has no Reformation. It has given birth to no great universities and schools of learning. It has no Protestantism. It remains very much as the fourth and fifth centuries left it : like an ancient tree of the forest, which has grown up in some sequestered spot sheltered from the storm—incrusted with moss and lichen, and hoary with age. It takes its very name from the Greek empire, founded by Constantine, and it is to that far-off period of history of which the last lecturer spoke in detail, that we must go back if we are to understand its doctrinal position to-day, and estimate rightly its relation to the rest of Christendom. When the royal throne in the days of the first Christian Emperor was removed from Rome to Constantinople, there arose at once a cause of strife between the Bishops of old and new Rome, as Byzantium or Constantinople was named. Each claimed pre-eminence, and each alternately received it from the governing powers in Church and State.

One Council decreed (A.D. 381) that the Bishop of the new Rome should be inferior only to that of the old ; another declared (A.D. 451) the equality of both prelates. The Patriarch of Constantinople at the close of the sixth century claimed superiority over all Christian Churches,—a claim which might have developed, had circumstances favoured it, into an Eastern Papacy. The assumption was, however, but short-lived, and the Bishop of Rome, Boniface, obtained from the Emperor Phocas in 606 the much-coveted position. The Eastern Church submitted, but from this time looked with a jealous eye on her Western sister. She noted and magnified every point of divergence between them. Differences or apparent differences in doctrine and ritual were denounced as heresies. Excommunications fulminated between the Eastern and Western city, and ecclesiastical bitterness was intensified by political intrigue. In the ninth century the contest grew very fierce. The holder of the Eastern see, Photius, formulated and denounced the terrible doctrinal and other defections of the Western prelate and his followers. The list is very formidable. They, the followers of Rome, deemed it proper to fast on the seventh day of the week—that is, on the Jewish Sabbath ; in the first week of Lent they permitted the use of milk and cheese ; they disapproved wholly of the marriage of priests ; they thought none but bishops could anoint with the holy oil or confirm the baptized, and that they therefore anointed a second time those who had been anointed by presbyters ; and fifthly, they had adulterated the Constantinopolitan Creed by adding to it the words *Filioque*, thus teaching that the Holy Spirit did not



proceed only from the Father, but also from the Son. This last was deemed, and has always been deemed by the Greek Church the great heresy of the Roman Church. Pope Leo III. at a Council at Aix-la-Chapelle in 809, approved of the words, and soon after, in order to give them greater authority, the Canons of the great Council of Constantinople were falsified by the interpolation of the disputed clause. This was deemed by the Easterns the great sin of the Western Church, and has never been forgiven. The Greek or Russian priest of to-day denounces the impious act of adding these words to the Creed of the Holy Council of Constantinople with as fierce indignation as if the deed were but newly done. But there were other heresies held also in great abhorrence. The controversy as to the use of unleavened bread by the Latins in the Eucharist was almost equal in intensity to that regarding the procession of the Holy Spirit; and other deviations from orthodoxy were noted with equal precision. The Latins did not abstain from things strangled and from blood; the monks used lard in their food, and allowed the brethren to eat flesh; their bishops wore rings on their fingers, and their priests wore no beards, and in baptism dipped the subject but once instead of three times into the water. These were the main grounds of contention, and as time went on the warfare continued. Negotiations were held which sometimes produced a short truce between the combatants, but the old jealousies speedily broke out again. When the Greek Empire lost its ancient glory and renown, the power of the Papacy became firmly rooted, and its arrogant assumptions considerably increased. About

the middle of the eleventh century, the Pope of Rome, aiming at universal supremacy, began to interfere directly in the affairs of the East, and to assert an authority which the Patriarch of Constantinople resented. He even attempted to induce the holders of two of the most ancient of the Eastern sees, the Patriarchs of Alexandria and Antioch, to submit to the Papal jurisdiction, and to do homage to him as the supreme bishop. This intrigue was bitterly resented by Michael Cerularius, Patriarch of Constantinople. He remonstrated fiercely with the Pope—so fiercely, that he roused the Pope to retaliation, and he pronounced at Rome the sentence of excommunication upon the Eastern prelate. The Patriarch, wishing to avert the taking effect of this sentence, invited legates from Rome to visit him and to see if the breach might not be healed. The legates came, but they did not come in the spirit of peacemakers. They treated during the negotiations the Eastern clergy with studied insolence, and at last, on a memorable day, the 16th June 1054, they repaired to the great Church of Saint Sophia in Constantinople, and there, in the name of the Pope, they excommunicated the Patriarch and all his adherents in his own Cathedral. After pronouncing their dread anathema, they placed their sentence on the High Altar of the Church, and shaking the dust off their feet they left the city. This high-handed deed rendered the rupture between East and West final. It may be said to date formally from the day when the scene was enacted in Saint Sophia. No negotiations could ever bring them again into anything approaching harmony. One famous attempt at reconciliation was

made in a Council held at Florence in 1438. The Eastern Church was hard beset by the infidel Mohammedans, and Constantinople itself was assailed by the Turks. The Greek patriarch of the time was willing to do much and to surrender much to obtain union with Rome. If any union could be effected, it was believed the Greek Empire might be saved, and a Western crusade organised in its behalf. The Easterns who attended the Council at Florence acceded to the demands of the Pope almost entirely. They formally acknowledged that the Holy Spirit proceeded from the Father and the Son, that unleavened bread might be used in the Eucharist, that the doctrine of purgatory is true and Christian, and that the Roman Pontiff is the head of the Church Universal. The Greek Church, however, as a body, refused to ratify such great concessions. The deputies at Florence on their return seem to have been ashamed of their own deed. They stated that the proceedings had been carried on by artifice and fraud, and that they considered their acts as null and void. Even in her great extremity, when sore pressed by the Turk, the Greek Church refused to surrender her ancient position and to bow her neck to the Roman yoke. Political changes rendered the division between East and West more and more difficult to heal, and when in 1454 Constantinople fell into the hands of the Mohammedans, the rupture was finally completed. Since that time each has gone its own way, or perhaps we should rather say, the Western Church has gone on its own way, leaving the Greek where it was, and where we find it to-day, clinging still proudly to the doctrinal positions it deemed in those early days of

paramount importance, and pronouncing upon all who differ from them its anathema.

The Greek Church of to-day in all its branches—in Turkey, Greece, and Russia—professes to hold firmly by the formulas and decisions of the seven Œcumenical or General Councils, regarding with special honour that of Nice. The Nicene and Athanasian Creeds are the symbols of its faith, the *Filioque* clause being omitted from the former, and the eighth article reading thus: ‘And in the Holy Ghost, the Lord, and Giver of life, who proceedeth from the Father, and with the Father and Son together is worshipped and glorified.’ The Greek Church having no special authorised Confession like the Articles of the Church of England, or the Confession of Westminster, we can only gain a knowledge of its theology from its catechisms and liturgies, or from the Church Councils, which have, on the one hand, promulgated rules for the guidance and instruction of the faithful, and, on the other, have denounced opinions opposed to those held by the orthodox. One such important Church Council was held at Jerusalem in 1672, and attended by sixty-eight Eastern bishops. Its decrees answer in some measure in definiteness of statement, if not in authority, to those of the Council of Trent in the Roman Church, and may help us to understand the opinions held by the Greek upon points of theology which are especially interesting to Protestants.<sup>1</sup> The Articles of this

<sup>1</sup> Any who may wish to enter further upon the subject of the Eastern theology may be referred to the ‘Orthodox Confession’ of Peter Mogilas of Kief, to the Catechism of Platon, Metropolitan of Moscow (1812), and to that of Philaret, approved of by the Holy Synod of St. Petersburg.

Council, so far as they seem of special interest, may be rapidly summarised. The doctrine of the Holy Trinity is held in common with Western Christendom, but with the single procession of the Spirit. With the Church of Rome it is held that Holy Scripture must be interpreted, not by private judgment, but in accordance with the tradition of the Catholic Church, which cannot err or deceive, or be deceived, and is equally authoritative with the Scriptures. No infallible Pope, however, is acknowledged as defining what the belief of the Church is. The doctrine of creation, of Providence, the primitive state and fall of man, of the Incarnation of the Son of God, His death, resurrection, ascension, and return to judgment, are stated very much as in the Western creeds. As to the work of Christ, He is the only Mediator and Advocate with God ; but the saints, and especially the immaculate mother of our Lord, as also the holy angels, bring our petitions before Him and give them greater effect. No one can be saved without faith, which is a certain persuasion, and works by love. It justifies before Christ, and without it no one can please God. The Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church comprehends all true believers in Christ, and is governed by Christ through duly ordained bishops in unbroken succession. Members of the Catholic Church are all the faithful who firmly hold the faith of Christ as delivered by Him, the apostles, and the holy synods, although some of them may be subject to various sins. The Catholic Church is taught by the Holy Ghost through prophets, apostles, holy fathers, and synods, and therefore cannot err or be deceived, or choose a lie for the

truth. Man is justified not by faith alone, but also by works. Man has been debilitated by the Fall, and lost his perfection and freedom from suffering, but not his intellectual and moral nature. He has still the free-will or power to choose and do good, or to flee and hate evil. But good works done without faith cannot contribute to our salvation; only the works of the regenerate done under grace and with grace are perfect, and render the one who does them worthy of salvation. With regard to the Sacraments, the Greek agrees with the Roman Church that they are seven—namely, baptism, confirmation, ordination, the unbloody sacrifice of the altar, matrimony, penance, and extreme unction. Those sacraments are not empty signs of divine promises, but necessarily are for grace. Baptism is necessary to salvation, and its effect is the remission of hereditary and previous actual sin, and the gift of the Holy Ghost. Sins committed after baptism must be remitted by priestly absolution in repentance and confession. The Eucharist is both a sacrament and a sacrifice, in which the body and blood of Christ are truly and really present, under the figure and type of bread and wine, are offered to God by the hands of the priest as a real though unbloody sacrifice for all the faithful, whether living or dead, and are received by the hand and mouth of unworthy as well as worthy communicants, though with opposite effects. With regard to the future state, the souls of the departed are either at rest or in torment according to their conduct in life, but their condition will not be perfect till the resurrection of the body. The souls of those who die in a state of penitence, without

having brought forth the fruits of repentance, depart into Hades, and there must suffer the punishment for their sin, but they may be delivered by the prayers of the priests and the alms of their kindred, especially by the unbloody sacrifice of the mass which individuals offer for their departed relatives, and which the Catholic and Apostolic Church offers for all alike. The liberation from this intervening state of purification will take place before the resurrection and general judgment, though the time is unknown. These are the chief decrees of the Council of Jerusalem. Incorporated with them are the views also of the Council upon some disputed points of doctrine and practice. The general and indiscriminate reading of the Holy Scriptures, especially certain portions of the Old Testament, is discouraged, and even prohibited. The perspicuity of the Scriptures is denied. The worship of saints, especially the mother of God (who is the object of hyperdulia as distinct from the ordinary *dulia* of saints, and the *latria* or worship proper due to God), is taught, and the worshipful veneration of the cross, the holy gospels, the holy vessels, the holy places, and of the images of Christ and of the saints, is inculcated.<sup>1</sup>

Such, in as small a compass as we are able to put it, is the creed of the Greek Church as set forth in the decrees of one of its own Councils. Substantially it seems to agree with that of the Roman, the chief difference being the *Filioque* clause; and it is apparently equally opposed with the Roman to the faith of the Reformed Churches. This, however, has

<sup>1</sup> I am indebted for the account of the decrees of the Council of Jerusalem to Schaff's *History of the Creeds of Christendom*.

not been the opinion, it is fair to say, of theologians of the Greek Church in their attitude towards the Roman, or of doctors of the Reformed Churches in their attitude towards the Greek. By the former the Roman Church is regarded with intense aversion. The Eastern priest will welcome the Protestant with kindness, and will give him the kiss of peace because he believes him inspired like himself with enmity to the Pope of Rome and his followers. The dogma of the supremacy of the Pope and the claims of the Papacy he regards with perhaps greater abhorrence than the most extreme Protestant, and the aversion has been largely increased by the promulgation of the infallibility dogma. On the other hand, there have been divines of the Reformed Churches of all schools who have found in the Eastern Church doctrinal resemblance to their own, to whom any divergence in creed has seemed of little moment, and capable of being almost explained away. The doctrinal system of the Eastern Church has not been so fully developed, so definitely stated, or so philosophically treated as that of the Church of Rome ; it is full of metaphysical and subtle distinctions, and it is probably this want of definiteness that has led many to regard it with greater favour and hopefulness than they regard the dogmas and practices of the Church of Rome. Thus, though prayers are in use for the dead, nothing is dogmatically determined regarding the state and condition of departed souls, no system of indulgences has been built up upon the dogma, and it is even urged that the service for the dead is in the main only a commemoration or affectionate remembrance of the faithful, such as is in use in the Protestant



Churches. The mother of our Lord is regarded with a veneration which in elevation of sentiment equals any of the devotions offered to her in the West, but it is too abstract and indefinite to allot to her in the scheme of salvation, or the protection of the Church, the powerful place which is ascribed to her by Latin divines. The reverence for her sanctity has never crystallised into the modern dogma of the immaculate conception. The boundary between the rhetorical poetical addresses to the saints in the Eastern worship and the actual invocation of their aid, has never been laid down with precision. 'Transubstantiation,' if used at all as a theological term, is merely one amongst many to express the reverential awe with which the Eucharist is approached. It is not in the exact repetition of the words of the original institution as in the Church of Rome, but in the general and more spiritual form of the invocation of the Spirit, that the Eastern Church places the moment of the consecration of the elements. The priestly form of absolution in the Western Church, 'I absolve thee,' in the Eastern is a prayer for pardon, 'May the Lord absolve thee.'<sup>1</sup> Thus it is in various particulars the creed of the Greek Church, which appears at first sight but little different from that of Rome, has been found by some on examination to be susceptible of explanations which not only emphasise the distinction between the Papal and Oriental Churches, but bring the latter into greater affinity with Protestant Christendom.

When we pass from the creed of the Eastern Church to consider its ritual and mode of worship, we find it

<sup>1</sup> Stanley, *Eastern Church*, p. 36 *et infra*.

difficult to give of these more than a very general idea indeed. Anything like a detailed account of its various ceremonies is beyond the compass of a lecture, and has indeed been the subject of large volumes. Its ritual presents us, as has been well said, with 'a union of barbaric rudeness and elaborate ceremonialism.' Even as I write there rises before my mind the remembrance of vast churches filled with earnest and excited worshippers, standing or moving to and fro, never sitting or kneeling; priests, clad in jewelled garments, appearing and disappearing through golden doors; wild-sounding chants taken up alternately by clergy and by laity; extraordinary pictures, the offspring of the rudest art, but adorned with gold and precious stones, regarded with deepest veneration; and I feel how impossible it is to give to any one who has not seen it any adequate conception of the pomp and splendours of Eastern ceremonial. The perusal of the service-books which have been translated conveys to us only a very tame idea of the services themselves. The prayers are rhetorical and inflated, the repetitions are wearisome, the hymns bombastic; but when one hears them sung by many voices, unaccompanied by instrumental music, which is forbidden, but led often by choirs perfectly trained, the effect is very striking; even the *Kyrie Eleison*, sometimes repeated fifty times, or the *Gospodi Pomlui*, 'Lord, have mercy on us,' of the Russian worshipper, which seems almost ceaseless, do not seem wearisome, expressing, as these cries appear to do, the utmost earnestness, fervour, penitence, and devotion on the part of those who utter them.

A Greek temple is divided into two parts, or rather

a screen, called the iconostasis, cuts off a portion of the eastern end. In this screen are three doors. Behind one is the sacristy or robing-chamber ; behind another the credence-table, where the sacramental elements are prepared. Behind the centre door stands the altar. The iconostasis is generally profusely decorated. It is the object on which the eye on entering and during service naturally rests. Behind it the greatest part of the service is performed, the priest being out of sight of the people, who hear his voice sounding within. But there are times when the golden, royal or centre door opens, and the priest comes forth from what is regarded as the Holy of Holies, into which no layman can enter. The chief office is the Liturgy or Eucharistic service. Various forms of these 'Liturgies' are to be found throughout the East, but that in constant use in the 'Orthodox' Church is the Liturgy of St. Chrysostom and occasionally that of St. Basil, of which it is an abridgment. It is a long service, entirely unlike the Roman Mass, yet equally far removed from our ideas of what the primitive Eucharist was, and of how it should be celebrated now. There are in this form some venerable and beautiful prayers, one of which is in the Anglican Liturgy, where it is called 'a prayer of St. Chrysostom ;' but there are, accompanying these, observances of a very peculiar character : bowing, prostrations, washing of hands, offering of incense. The Host is carefully prepared on the side altar. The cake of bread is pierced with a spear ; a portion of it is put aside in commemoration of the Virgin ; nine pieces are arrayed in three rows in commemoration of John the Baptist, Moses, Aaron, Elijah, Elisha, David,

Jesse ; the three young men ; Daniel, and all the holy Prophets ; Peter, Paul, James, John, and all the holy Apostles ; Basil the Great, and certain saints held in veneration by the Eastern Church, and for all the quick and dead, whom the priest mentions. The most striking part of the service to the onlooker is what is called the Great Entrance, when the priest takes the patten and places it on the deacon's head or shoulders, and they both issue forth into the church, the priest following with the cup in his hand ; they go out at the north door, then round the church, preceded by singers, and in at the golden door. The consecration service is long and elaborate. The priest prays God to make the bread and wine the precious body and blood of Christ, first for each element separately, and then for both united. He then invokes the gift of the Holy Ghost, and lastly he addresses Jesus Christ our God, 'who sittest on the right hand of the Father, and yet art invisibly present with us here below, vouchsafe by thy mighty hand to impart to us thy most immaculate body and thy precious blood, and by our hands to all the people.' The Sacrament is then administered to the deacon and afterwards to the congregation. The Communion is given to the people in both kinds, the bread being mixed with the wine in the cup, and administered by the priest with a spoon, the deacon following with a cloth, with which he wipes carefully the recipient's mouth and beard, lest any of the Host should adhere to them. It is received by the people standing.

There are many offices in use in the Greek Church beside that of the Liturgy, all of them distinct in some

particulars, if not in all, from Western usages, whether Roman or Protestant. Preaching may be said never to be practised in the Greek Church. Sermons are never heard ; occasionally a life of one of the Saints is read to the people after the Liturgy, but anything like public instruction, either in a didactic or catechetical form, is unknown. The services are everything, and they are almost endless in their variety. The complete collection of church services fills twenty folio volumes, with an additional volume of directions, the study of which occupies much of the time and training of a Greek priest.

The marked differences between the Eastern and the Roman ritual, besides the general character of the services, are numerous : threefold immersion in baptism, which is held to be the only valid form of the sacrament ;—confirmation, which the Church of Rome makes a separate rite, is conjoined with the act of baptism ;—anointing with oil is used in cases of sickness, and not, as in the Church of Rome, in the extreme moments of life ;—the Communion is administered to infants, a practice which Rome forbids ;—the bread in the Eucharist is leavened instead of being unleavened, and the sacrament is administered in both kinds instead of one only as in the Roman office ;—in prayer the worshippers stand instead of kneeling, according to Roman usage ;—the sexes at public services are strictly separated, and the Eucharistic service is performed behind a screen, and not, as it is by the Roman priest, in the sight of the people ;—the vernacular languages are used in public worship, whereas Latin is the one language employed in the Roman service. In some parts of Asia Minor where no language is

spoken but Turkish, the Liturgy is said in that language. In Russia the old Slavonic tongue is used. Very often, however, the language of the service-books has become obsolete, and to the Russian peasant the Slavonic prayers are as unintelligible as if they were said in Latin. There is some difficulty in ascertaining how far the attitude of the Greek Church in regard to the general circulation and use of the Scriptures differs from that of the Roman. In the Synod of Jerusalem, to which we have already referred, the general and indiscriminate reading of the Holy Scriptures, especially certain portions of the Old Testament, was discouraged, and even prohibited. In certain countries, however, where the Greek Church is dominant, there has been no obstacle thrown in the way of the circulation of the Scriptures, especially the New Testament Scriptures, by the Bible Societies of our own country and America. Russia has always possessed a version of the Scriptures, first in the Slavonic, and now in the Russ tongue, issued for general circulation with the countenance of the ecclesiastical authorities. A modern traveller<sup>1</sup> tells us that, 'except in New England and in Scotland, no people in the world, so far as they can read, are greater Bible readers than the Russians,'—'that the Russian peasant loves his Bible even more than his dram.' Probably this is an exaggerated statement, but we may say generally that while the Eastern Church on the one hand does not expressly prohibit and openly oppose the circulation of the Scriptures in the vernacular, she does but little to encourage it, and probably regards it with no great favour.

<sup>1</sup> *Free Russia*, by Hepworth Dixon, vol. ii. p. 206 *et infra*.

The Greek Church, unlike the Latin, denounces the use of images as objects of devotion, and holds in abhorrence every form of what it terms 'image-worship.' Its position in this matter is very curious. It is true, no figures of our Lord, of the Virgin, or saints, such as one sees in churches, wayside chapels, and in the open fields in countries where the Roman Church is powerful, are to be seen in Russia, Greece, or any of those lands where the Eastern Church is supreme. On the other hand, pictures of the plainest kind everywhere take their place, and are regarded with the deepest veneration. If there are no miracle-working images, there are pictures to which the same power is ascribed, which are carried before armies in battle, and borne to sick-beds as possessing healing efficacy. On the north side of the royal door in the iconostasis, the picture of the Virgin is always placed, and that of Jesus on the south, next to which is that of the saint to which the church is dedicated. Before these, and other similar pictures in the church, people are always seen crossing themselves, making prostrations, going up to them, and kissing them. In Russia this veneration of icons, as these sacred pictures are called, meets one everywhere. Making icons is a regular trade. An icon is in the corner of every room, in every steamboat, at every street corner, and before them every passer-by pauses reverently and makes his obeisance. There are holy pictures which are regarded with special reverence, and have ascribed to them supernatural powers. Most visitors to Moscow will recall the picture of the Redeemer of Smolensk, as it is called, placed over the great portal of the Kremlin, through which no one is allowed to pass

without uncovering his head, and a soldier with fixed bayonet stands by to see that the obeisance is made. It is a picture which has been borne at the head of armies, and has struck consternation into the hearts of the enemies of holy Russia. No less famous is the picture which hangs in a shrine near the Sunday Gate. It is the icon of the Iberian Mother, the Russian goddess of healing. A strange picture it is, large, black, and apparently of great age. There is a nimbus of gold around the head, and the dress is profusely studded with jewels. At all hours of the day crowds may be seen bowing before this work of rudest art, and offering up their prayers. Those who cannot gain admittance to the little chapel prostrate themselves without. Before the picture itself there is a forest of candles ever burning. All this seems exceedingly like the image-worship of the Latin Church, but such an assertion, if made, would be at once indignantly denied. Pictures, according to the theology of the Greek Church, represent some real existence, while images represent the inventions of man. The Greek priest will quote to you the words of St. Paul, 'an idol is nothing in the world,' while he anathematises the image-worship of Rome; but he will tell you at the same time that a picture is the adumbration of something that is real and true, and is therefore to be differently regarded. The distinction he draws will probably seem to us extremely attenuated, as all such metaphysical distinctions are, but the same may be properly said of the causes which divide and keep apart Christians among ourselves, who outwardly seem nearer to one another than even the Roman Catholic and the Orthodox Eastern. There is

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one other distinction between these Churches which is more pronounced than the one we have just mentioned, and which it would not be right to pass without noting, in summing up their differences. The Greek priest is allowed to marry, and is even compelled to do so, though only once. If his wife dies he must remain celibate. This permission to marry applies, however, only to the secular clergy or ordinary parish priests. The bishops and monks must be unmarried men.

The government of the Greek Church is Episcopal. In the Turkish Empire it is divided into four metropolitan sees,—Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem. Each of these is presided over by a Patriarch. All have equal rights, and the first has only a primacy of honour. The churches of Greece and Russia are governed by Synods, in which the power of the Patriarchate is vested. The Russian Church, which is perhaps the branch of Eastern Christendom with which we are most familiar, was placed under a Council or Legislative Synod by Peter the Great. Since this time the Emperors of Russia have held the most unlimited sway over the Church of Russia. Without the presence of the procurator of the Emperor no meeting of the Holy Synod can be held, and without his consent no decision pronounced by it is valid. To this Synod the election of bishops is intrusted, and it possesses over them and the affairs of the Church generally, a very strict power of supervision. Under the bishops are many clergy and subordinate officials,—priests, deacons, subdeacons, and a whole array of other functionaries too numerous to mention. The position of the secular

clergy of the East is generally of a very humble character. The priest associates with the common people more as a companion than a teacher. His subsistence is drawn mainly from fees for the performance of occasional services, and a hard bargain is sometimes drawn before the service is performed. As a rule the ordinary clergy are extremely ignorant, and learning and culture, when found at all, are to be met with only among the Black clergy, as the monks are called. The Eastern Church is largely monastic, and has been so from the very earliest times. It has been truly pointed out by the late Dean of Westminster that the words which describe the monastic state are not Latin, but Greek or Syriac: hermit, monk, anchorite, monastery, cœnobite, ascetic, abbot, abbey. It was in the East, not the West, that the first monasteries were founded, and in the East monasticism still flourishes with unrivalled intensity. In Russia a few years ago there were over six hundred convents and nunneries, and ten thousand monks. Moscow is encircled by convents. From the ranks of the monks the bishops are invariably chosen, and sometimes a bishop is at the head of a convent. Many of the convents of the Greek Church are of immense size, and have many churches within their boundaries and many monks as their inmates. That of Troitsa, to the north of Moscow, may be regarded as a specimen of conventual magnificence. It is said to be the richest in the world,—rich in the material wealth it possesses, rich in its relics and objects of worship, rich in the affection with which it is regarded as a place of devotion and pilgrimage among Slavonic peoples. It is a fortress, a university, a cathedral, and a sanctuary;

within the walls are many churches, whose coloured domes and golden crosses glance brightly in the sunshine; crowds of pilgrims stream along the roads leading to this shrine, and throng the churches and open spaces, and draw water from the holy well. Strange-looking beings they are, long-bearded, ragged, travel-stained, many of them passing their life in going from one holy place to another from Archangel to Jerusalem. They kneel before the picture of the Virgin, which once had the gift of speech, and kiss with deepest reverence the icon of St. Sergie, whose shrine of solid curiously wrought silver weighs a thousand pounds. It is an extraordinary manifestation of religious life, and no one who has witnessed it can ever forget it. It is repeated on a lesser or even greater scale everywhere throughout the East. Any one who has travelled in Egypt, Syria, or Greece, has noticed the curiously-placed monasteries of these countries. Often these are situated in the most inaccessible positions,—on the summit of outstanding rocks, like that of Mar-Saba near Jerusalem, or on well-guarded heights, like that of Mount Athos in the Levant. The convents seem more like fortifications than places of devotion, and have probably been built as a refuge from the surrounding Pagans or Mohammedans, to which Christians might fly. The ‘Holy Mountain’ of Mount Athos is given over to the monks. Within its circumference there are twenty monasteries, besides a large number of hermits who follow ‘the religious life’ apart. The number of monks on that comparatively small space of ground is reckoned at 3000, and the lay brethren

who till the farms and perform manual offices are equally numerous. Six or seven hours of each day are spent in Church services, and on the great festivals from sixteen to twenty hours are spent consecutively in church. Their life is one of severe mortification. They never touch meat ; half of the days of the year are fast-days ; on these they take only one meal, composed of bread, vegetables, and water. They never get a whole night's rest, having to rise constantly to attend the Church services, the first of which begins between one and two in the morning. Monasticism is an outstanding feature of Oriental Christianity, and probably is as inoperative for good in the East as it is in the West. The Greek monk is of a lower order than his Western brother, and does even less for the world. His life is more of a subjective or contemplative kind. He passes his time in a round of religious observances, and mingles but little with the practical life of men. Nor can he be said to do much, unlike some of the Latin orders, for the propagation of his faith. Though the convent of Mount Sinai is in the heart of the Bedouin tribes, the brethren have done nothing to civilise or christianise these nomads. They are allowed to remain Mohammedan or Pagan ; and even within the precincts of the convent there is a mosque erected for their convenience. One form of service succeeds to another. In the dead of night the traveller hears sounding the call to prayer, the grand church is ablaze with light and filled with incense, and in the rugged mount itself there are chapels isolated and apart where service is regularly performed. It is said that these convents serve to the world as an

example of holy life, that they retain unchanged old customs and principles, and are thus a bulwark against heresy, that their constant prayers are a source of strength and support to the Church, and that in prosperous times they serve as seats of learning and places of study. It may well be doubted by an impartial observer how far these statements are correct. The impression, I believe, will be that in the East monastic life has been tried on a large scale, and under favourable conditions, and has failed. There is one feature, however, of Eastern conventual life which is more pleasant to dwell upon than its monotony and indolence. Hospitality is a virtue which is universally practised. Strangers are welcomed by the brethren, and kindly treated; and in lands where inns are rare and far apart, the convent supplies a want which is much appreciated by all who have availed themselves of it.

The great Eastern Church has been but little affected during its history by the great movements of Western Christendom. The throes of the Reformation were almost unfelt by it, and the march of scientific discovery has never broken its slumber. The echoes of modern controversies have hardly reached its ear. A modern traveller, Mr. Curzon, tells us that the Patriarch of Constantinople, whom he visited, had never heard of the Church of England or the Archbishop of Canterbury, and bemoans his ignorance. Some of the higher clergy, especially in Russia, are men of education and refinement, but the mass of the priesthood are ignorant of the world, beyond their own limited sphere,—some of them so ignorant that they cannot read their own service-

books, and repeat their offices by heart. The country parish priest in Russia is not on a much higher level in education or manner than his rude parishioners, and performs his offices for their benefit in the same mechanical way in which the miller grinds their corn.

Approaches have been made to the Greek Church by representatives of Western Christendom, either with a view of reforming the Church, or of entering into corporate union with it, but these approaches have not met with great success. Fervid preachers in Russia and Turkey have striven to evangelise and to quicken spiritual life, but their efforts have only been powerful enough to cause a slight ripple on the surface, which has soon passed away. The Church is the One Holy Orthodox Church. It rests on its old formulas and dogmas, and into the old bottles it has no desire to receive new wine. That any new light should break forth since the early Councils is impossible. Towards those who have desired union, it has returned the same reply: 'Become as we are, and we will be one.' In the sixteenth century Lutheran divines approached Jeremiah, the great Patriarch of Constantinople, with overtures of fellowship, but their answer was an emphatic condemnation of the Augsburg Confession, with the exception of the only two points in which he agreed,—its approbation of the early Œcumenical Councils and the marriage of priests. The divines sought to enter into discussion, and sent many letters, but the Patriarch declined to discuss with them, and ceased to answer. Early in the eighteenth century two nonjuring English bishops

along with two Scottish bishops assumed the responsibility of corresponding with Peter the Great and the Eastern Patriarchs, but with little more success than the repulsed Lutherans. From the latter they received an ultimatum, requiring absolute submission to the dogmas of the Greek Church; from the Russians they received what probably was meant to convey in more polite language the same intimation—an invitation to send two delegates to discuss the points of difference. This came to nothing, the death of Peter putting an end to all negotiations. In 1862, the Anglican Church, the Episcopal Church of America, and the Episcopal Church in Scotland, jointly, made fresh overtures to their Eastern sister; visits were made by Church dignitaries to the East, and friendly and unofficial conferences between leading divines were held in London, St. Petersburg, and Moscow. The Western divines were received with all consideration, and all they had to say listened to in the kindest spirit. The result has perhaps led to a better understanding of one another's positions, but to little more. The Easterns kept doggedly to their old position. 'They found strange novelties in the Thirty-nine Articles; they took especial offence at Article Nineteenth, which asserts that the Churches of Jerusalem, Alexandria, and Antioch have erred; they expressed serious scruples about the validity of Anglican orders, on account of a flaw in Archbishop Parker's ordination, and on account of the second marriage of many Anglican bishops and priests; they cannot recognise Anglican baptism because it is not administered by trine immersion. The Russo-Greeks insist on the expulsion of the

*Filioque*, which is their main objection to Rome, the recognition of the seventh Œcumenical Council, the invocation of the Holy Virgin and the Saints, the veneration of icons, prayers for the departed, seven sacramental mysteries, trine immersion, a mysterious transformation of the Eucharistic elements, the eucharistic sacrifice for the living and the dead.<sup>1</sup> In this position the question mainly stands. A class of Anglican divines are specially anxious that the ties between their Church and the Churches of the East may be drawn more closely, and a Society composed of earnest men exists in England to bring about this end alike by their prayers and their efforts. They are very hopeful, but, so far as one can judge, no great success has attended their enterprise, and but little progress has been made towards formal ecclesiastical fellowship, and probably no great progress will ever be made unless, on the one hand, a greater spirituality is quickened in the old Eastern Church, or the Anglican receives and acknowledges dogmas which are inconsistent with her position as a Protestant Church, and the reception of which would to many amount to an abandonment of her truest and best functions.

It would lead us beyond our proper limits were we to notice in anything like detail the various Eastern sects, and we have confined ourselves to the great representative of Eastern Christendom. But scattered here and there throughout the East are ancient Churches which dissent from many of her positions, and which are more or less in conflict with her,—the Nestorians, the Jacobites, the Copts, the Abyssinians, the Armenians. These have all

<sup>1</sup> Schaff, *History of the Creeds of Christendom*.



curious practices and special dogmas peculiar to themselves, but even more than the Greek Church seem sunk in ignorance and superstition. In the Ethiopian calendar it is said that Pilate is canonised because he washed his hands and said, 'I am innocent of the blood of this just man,' and in Abyssinia it is held 'that every sin is forgiven from the moment that the kiss of the pilgrim is imprinted on the stones of Jerusalem, and that kissing the hand of a priest purifies the body in like manner.' There are many dissenters from the Church of Russia, who, if not formed into organised communities, have a widespread influence among the people. Some of these sects hold views of the most outrageous kind, opposed to civilisation, or even the commonest morality, and such as could only find favour with an utterly uncivilised and barbarous people; others differ but little from the National Church. The 'old believers' reject the benediction with three fingers instead of two, the pronouncing of the name of Jesus with two syllables instead of three, processions from right to left instead of from left to right, the use of modern Russ in the service-books, the new mode of chanting, the use of Western pictures, the modern practice of shaving (unknown to the patriarchs, apostles, and holy fathers), the use of tobacco (though not of whisky), and the eating the potato as the forbidden fruit of paradise.<sup>1</sup> It is perhaps unbecoming in us to laugh, as we are naturally tempted to do, at these absurdities, for we see differences almost as frivolous among ourselves treated as of equal importance, and the more frivolous they are, the more tenaciously they are apparently clung to.

<sup>1</sup> See Hepworth Dixon's *Free Russia*.

In closing our sketch of the Eastern Church, it only remains for us to say a word or two on its practical influence. What the influence of the Eastern Church for good is upon those who belong to it is not easy for us to estimate. In all lands there is a vast difference between the teaching of the Church and the practice of the worshippers, for which the Church cannot be held altogether responsible. The ritual of Eastern Christianity covers a man's life from beginning to end. It begins with his baptism, it ends with his funeral. Every one of the faithful carries under or above his dress the cross he received at his baptism. In every room of his house there is a sacred picture. His Church is with him early and late. His priest consecrates every step that he takes. If he changes his dwelling, begins a trade, opens a shop, embarks on a voyage, his priest must perform a ritual for him, and he must seek the blessing of the Church. There are prayers for him if he has been injured by an evil eye. There are invocations for him if he is sleepless. There are conjurations against the animals that destroy his crops. His common life is covered by a close-fitting garment of ceremonial. It is so close-fitting that it has perhaps left little space for the heart below to beat. It has overlaid him so thoroughly that the life it should foster it has too often destroyed. There is a tendency with men everywhere to let the ritual take the place of the life, and make religion begin and end with ceremonial, and that tendency is marked very strongly in Eastern Christendom, more marked probably than elsewhere. The Eastern Churchman who will refuse to eat cheese on Friday will live regardless almost of every law, human or

divine. Measured by their outward devotions, their fasts, their pilgrimages, and their respect for the ceremonies of their Church, the populations of Russia and Greece are the most religious in the world. Measured by the standard of the life, the estimate must be a far lower one, even in the judgment of the most charitable observer. This much we may say without denouncing the Greek Church, as is sometimes done by pious persons to whom strong invectives seem naturally to come, or regarding her as apostate and the 'mystical mother of harlots and abominations of the earth.'

We may well believe that this great Church has not been preserved throughout long centuries in vain ; that she has kept alive the religious feeling in lands where otherwise it would have died away altogether ; and we may well also hope that a bright future awaits her—an emancipation from her many superstitions—an awakening from her long slumbers to Christian activity—and a larger participation of that spiritual life which is the inspiration of a true Christian man and of a true Christian Church.

This lecture is based to a considerable extent on recollections of travel in Russia and in the East. The following authorities have been also consulted :—Schaff, *Creeds of Christendom*, vol. ii. John King, *Rites and Ceremonies of the Greek Church in Russia*. John Mason Neale, *History of the Holy Eastern Church*. Stanley, *Lectures on the Eastern Church*. William Hepworth Dixon, *Free Russia*. George Waddington, D.D., *The Greek Church*. H. C. Romanoff, *Rites and Customs of the Greco-Russian Church*. R. Curzon, *Visits to Monasteries of the Levant*. H. F. Tower, 'The Monks of Mount Athos' in *Vacation Tourists*, 1861. J. Wortabet, *Researches into the Religious Life of Syria*. Wallace, *Russia*. Hertzog, edited by P. Schaff, Art. 'Greek Church ;' *Edinburgh Review*, 1858, Art. 'The Eastern Church ;' and *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Art. 'Greek Church.'



## ST. GILES' LECTURES.

*FOURTH SERIES—THE CHURCHES OF CHRISTENDOM.*

*LECTURE V.*

### THE LATIN CHURCH.

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THE Latin Church as an institution may be taken as dating from the time when Christianity, by becoming the religion of the Emperor, became also the official religion of the Roman State. The memories of the old city gave to the new capital of Constantine its chief glory; so when there were two Empires it followed readily that there should be likewise two Churches. The fortunes of the Church that claimed the allegiance of what at one time seemed to be the greater portion<sup>1</sup> of Christendom have already been traced. The subject of the present lecture is the Church of the Western Empire only—a subject

<sup>1</sup> If the Eastern Empire be held to include the Oriental Churches the disparity is great. 'Under the reign of the Caliphs, the Nestorian Church was diffused from China to Jerusalem and Cyprus; and their numbers with those of the Jacobites were computed to surpass the Greek and Latin Communions.'—*Decline and Fall*, chap. 47.

so vast that any limitation of it is welcome. In the parts of the general subject of this course that are yet to be treated, well-defined portions are marked off as not belonging to our field. The inquiry why there is such a variety of Churches in the West, and how far the existence of these can be traced to the policy of Rome, might indeed properly fall under the heading of 'The Latin Church.' But I am content to leave polemical and critical discussion in this connection to those who will not be easily able to avoid it. The general character of the policy and of the methods by which the Church whose centre was Rome became the most important factor in modern civilisation, and by which it still remains an institution of enormous influence, is in itself a subject more than sufficiently large.

The ethnical term by which this lecture has been designated carries in it less of a judgment than any other that might have been chosen. If either 'the Roman Catholic Church' or 'the Popedom' had been our theme, a more distinct disavowal of prejudice would have been required than is now necessary. The endeavour to regain the universal sway of that Empire upon whose ruins the Roman Church arose, and the unity symbolised in an august Father whose word should be final throughout the widely spread family of Christians are, doubtless, main characteristics in the history of this powerful Church. But just because they are its most strongly marked features, do they often excite feelings that render impossible the calm survey that the interests of truth demand. The term *Latin* has nothing sectarian about it. It denotes an element that entered into

and modified the spirit of old Rome, where in the earliest times the so-called right of Latin citizenship fell short of the highest civic status, and seems to have implied nearly every privilege except that of ruling. Rome's greatest poet in the very beginning of his national epic makes a distinction between 'the Latin race' and 'the walls of lofty Rome.' We still feel compelled to speak of the *Latin* tongue, and of *Roman* law. Let us not regard this usage of speech as accidental. There is something behind the martial strength of the Republic and the Empire, as well as behind the imposing grandeur of the Christian hierarchy that is not sufficiently described by the word Roman. The Consul, the Emperor, the Pontiff, with their triumphs, their faults, their vices, are one theme; the Latin race, with its matchless vigour, energy, and organising power that ceased to manifest themselves on the world's stage except through the Christian Church, is another. That race was not exterminated when the city of the seven hills became a mass of blood-stained ruins. It survived, and supplied to the Church the greatest of those leaders who did not despair of the Church's fortunes, and it lives still because it had appropriated as much as it was able of the heritage that Greece, dying without natural heirs, had left to the world, because it had accepted, and was willing to employ, after the forms of its own genius, that Divine Gift which the Hebrews of Palestine had proved themselves incompetent to enjoy.

In the time immediately before that in which the Church began sensibly to move towards the position of being the directing power of the western world, we can discern three distinct factors in history. These

are, the Roman Empire, still mighty in resources and in prestige when it joined hands with the Church ; the Christian organisation, or Church, grown so strong that the state was fain to court an alliance with it ; and the barbarian peoples, a ring of devastating force closing in upon the bright spots of the earth's surface, even the sea that had become a highway for civilised men ceasing at length to form a barrier against their inroads. I doubt if people in general, even when ruin was at their door, had any vivid anticipation of the vials of wrath that were about to be poured out on the world. The permanency of the Roman dominion had so possessed the imagination of men, as part of the order of things, that their belief in it could hardly be shaken. The prosperity and the promise of progress heralded by the poets of the Augustan age impressed men's minds in the third century. Tertullian says of the Pagan Empire, with which he is so little in accord : 'The world has more of cultivation every day, and is better furnished than in times of old. All places are opened up now ; all are familiarly known ; all are scenes of business. . . . Islands are no longer wild ; the crag is no longer frightful ; everywhere there is a home, a population, a state, and a livelihood.' People living in luxury and in the enjoyment of both the coarse and the refined pleasures of life, with a serviceable army in the pay of the State, do not trouble themselves much about their distant frontiers, even though the regions beyond these teem with savages thirsting for blood and plunder. But the monarchs and statesmen of those days were not insensible to the danger. Here was the real motive of the policy which shifted the seat of

power to the East, and secured there a post of commanding strength by land and sea, as has since then been fully proved. That action preserved at least the semblance of imperial power for centuries, and for a long period it completely isolated the political, moral, and social life of the East from that of the West. Over Italy, France, and Spain the tempest from the north broke, not once only, but again and again, in successive storms that caused death and ruin, and threatened with annihilation every habit and institution which civilisation and religion had fostered. So when the Goth and the Hun had both done their fell work, and when, in the sixth century, the Lombard next set his face Romeward, Pope Gregory was constrained to cry, 'The cities are destroyed, the military stations broken up, the land devastated, the earth depopulated. No one remains in the country, scarcely any inhabitants are in the town ; yet the poor remains of human kind are still smitten daily and without intermission.' The Teutonic race, in the full strength of savagery was the master ; the Latin race, along with the peoples that in the course of centuries had been assimilated to it, was in slavery. But it was not to be the lot of modern Europe to have to look back in its manhood to German marshes only as its cradle. The spirit of the Latin must blend with that of the Teuton in order to give new leaders to the world, and the Church was now in a position to consummate and consecrate such a union. The hand of the Church has been plainly and constantly visible in the national affairs of Europe from the day when Pope Leo went out from the City to face the victorious Hun, down



to the present time when the master mind in modern politics does not disdain to employ the services of the Vatican in manipulating the parliamentary majorities which he sometimes uses. I must not attempt to quote special instances of this influence, however remarkable, but will describe generally the phases in which at different periods it has made itself felt. The ordinary division of modern history into ages called *the dark*, *the middle*, and *the recent*, is quite intelligible and defensible, and I venture to call the main characteristic of Church influence in each of these respectively *social*, *political*, and *ecclesiastical*.

I. The period between the collapse of the Western Empire and the beginning of the twelfth century may be termed *dark* for two reasons. Blind forces were struggling for the mastery amid the ruins of the old social life, and we can at this distance only dimly understand their various manifestations. The main thing for us after all is the result. During those seven centuries of confusion the old order was dissolved, and European society begins to appear re-constructed after another fashion. The visit of Charles the Great to Rome, A.D. 800, marks the point at which the waters of strife began to subside. His consecration as Emperor of the West was the outcome of the defence and attack that had been continuously maintained in one form or another ever since Latin and Teuton had met. The stronger race had won the fight. But the result was not the undisputed sovereignty of the barbarian. The thought and culture of centuries might indeed have counted for as little in the new order that was set up in Southern Europe as did the civilisation of famous Eastern lands under the des-

potisms established in them by their ruthless invaders. But Latin civilisation had already become the Latin Church, when the crash came, and there was thus an influence present powerful enough to overawe and fascinate the untutored minds of the victors. 'Not a man in Europe,' says Cardinal Newman, 'who talks bravely against the Church but owes it to the Church that he can talk at all.' It may be asserted that some feasible way would have been found out of the chaos that prevailed, even though there had been no Church to point it out. Yet it is not to be denied that other lands on which similar woe fell have not found such a way, and that the path which European civilisation has followed is the one which the Church opened and kept open. There is as little ground for discovering a miraculous, as there is for disowning a providential element in the course of events. The institutions of Roman authority and law had been planted regularly over all the territory which the conquering hordes coveted and seized; alongside of every magistrate was now placed a minister of Christ, and by every Hall of Justice stood a House of Prayer. The representative of Caesar lost all his power and dignity when the armies of Caesar were scattered in flight; the minister of Christ felt that behind him was an invisible force with which the hosts of the alien could not cope, and his behaviour impressed the barbarian with the conviction that there was reality here. That beneficent mission of Leo, A.D. 452, of which Gibbon says: 'The pressing eloquence of Leo, his majestic aspect and sacerdotal robes, excited the veneration of Attila for the spiritual father of the Christians'—would be but an

instance of what many nameless priests from provincial towns did, 'not counting their lives dear to them.' The organisation of the Latin state vitalised by a new spiritual force vanquished the victors. It was the method and the discipline of this organisation, not the subtlety of its doctrine, nor the fervour of its officials, that beat in detail one chief with his motley following after another. Hence too it came about that the Christianity which was adopted as the religion of Europe was not modified to suit the tastes of the various tribes that embraced it, but was delivered to each as from a common fountain-head. Central authority in due time asserted itself among those who were all baptized into the same name, and the tendencies that were to prevail began to manifest themselves as settled times allowed them. The growth of the Romance tongues in one portion of the continent, and the spread of various forms of Teutonic dialects in the other portion, already point to the course that modern history must take, but at the opening of the twelfth century the great feature of European society is the sway of one spiritual Father who claimed and received the homage of the nations that formed his family—the Church. Such was the result of a seven hundred years' trial of Latin methods animated with a new spirit. It was a *social* triumph, proceeding from religious motives which we may regard with unstinted admiration and gratitude. A destroying flood had been upon the earth, and during the whole continuance of it the Church was the one ark of safety.

. II. The Middle Ages may be held as lasting from the twelfth to the fifteenth century. The name given

to the period marks it as a period of transition. The policy of the past begins to have its due effect ; the seeds are sown from which the trees of modern liberty and progress will grow. This period of three centuries opens with the questionings about Christian doctrine that had been suspended during the dark ages, and closes with Christianity gilded with the elegance and weakened by the heartlessness of paganism. The schoolmen strove to formulate a rational theology ; at the renaissance Christian belief seemed to disappear from churchmen's hearts. So plastic were the methods of the Latin Church that its leaders may have thought that they could adopt any fashion and still prosper. But the time had come when the strength and the fitness of the elaborate machinery that had been devised for controlling the world had to be tested. It did not stand the test. No shame to the constructors of it, so far as regards their designing genius. The fatal defect was that the material that had to be employed was too frail. Such an army of human beings as was needed to carry out the purpose in view could not bear the strain put upon it in all its parts. And, it must be added, the purpose which it was intended to serve was immoral. The Latin Church in those years reached the pinnacle of its glory, but it also contracted stains of shame which it has not since been able to wipe away. During the middle ages it is a power on earth, but it is a political power. Men and societies that choose to play at the game of politics must be content to take the losses as well as the gains that come in its course. The Church whose centre was in Rome had a great career open to it.

It is not to be denied that it acted a great and, not seldom, a noble part. To have an arbiter of any kind among restless combatants to whom fighting is joy is a gain to the world. The Pope and his representatives were by no means disinterested judges in the brawls that were continually rising. But even in the worst times they paid a tribute of respect to the principles of which they were at least the professional upholders. Even when Pontiffs hired armies, and Prelates rode in armour at the head of their troops, the doctrine that the Church's mission was peace on earth was never quite forgotten. It is indeed hard to perceive how brute force could have been repelled without occasionally calling in a counteracting agency like itself under the sanction of the spiritual power. But the last resort of kings was too serviceable an agency to be used sparingly. So when the Pope was an Italian potentate who could be the soul of a powerful alliance, when Prelates of the Church had a determining voice in selecting the secular head of Christendom, when the ranks of the priesthood were recruited from all the grades of social life, when wealth poured into the coffers of the Church from prince, noble, and peasant, when the secrets of individuals, of families, and of kings' cabinets were at the command of the best disciplined and most intelligent organisation that the world has ever seen, when men believed that the Church alone held the keys of the realms into which their spirits passed, when the empire of the world, actual and potential, seemed given over to those who had some reason for believing that it was destined for them, it need not surprise us that the supremacy was eagerly seized and

jealously guarded. Not even the lofty austere spirit of Hildebrand could realise the true greatness of the conception of the 'City of God' upon earth. But even the inadequate idea that floated before his vision amid the bloodshed that he caused faded away from the sight of his successors. The temporal aims in view became as palpable as the carnal weapons that were employed. The schism which was the occasion of one papal court on the banks of the Rhone vying with another on the Tiber in worldly intrigue and in flagrant vice, made men ask themselves whether the representative of Christ was in either of these places. The revival of Greek learning too did its work. It gave a hue to the paganism which was already in the hearts of those who would be the despots of the world; it opened the Scriptures to patient scholars, who sought to discover what kind of kingdom God would set up among men. The hour had struck after which the world refused to be governed by machinery however cunningly devised. Science, geographical discovery, imagination united in declaring that the Latin conception of the world was antiquated. People who were still under the ancient spell through speaking the old tongue might be able to emancipate themselves only slowly and gradually from the bondage laid on soul and body. The Germanic races could not wait for such a tardy birth of freedom. They had conquered the Latin race in battle, had consented to take lessons from the vanquished, and had yielded to them all but complete submission in their spirits and through the persons of their rulers. But at last they awoke to the fact that their school-days were over. Henceforth

the Teuton race will seek its own path of progress. The force of the Latin race as a dominant political power was spent when the revolt led by Luther could be quelled neither by anathemas nor quenched in rivers of blood. The papal decrees were no more in reality, but only in name, issued '*Urbi et Orbi*.'

III. From the date of the peace that followed the Thirty Years' War, the Latin Church must be rated as but one of the ecclesiastical institutions of the world. The greatest, the most venerable, the most energetic, the mother of them all (reckoning only those who care to dispute her high claims), her children may still call her unchallenged, but her pretensions to the allegiance of Christendom will not be upheld by an unbiassed observer of the facts of history. It may be too much to expect of human nature that the heirs of such a high policy should explicitly abandon it, or consciously abate its demands. But in the field of history the logic of facts is stronger than the sentiment of the most dazzling theory. The Latin Church, true to the practical genius within it, that has always been its strength, has been content in recent times to move on ecclesiastical lines. Not that it has turned away from the barren task of forming political combinations, or has disdained the support which the marshalling of social forces brings to faith, but the propaganda in which it has trusted has been the ardour of its missionaries, the ability of its preachers, the skill of its instructors, the discipline of its subordinated officials, the devotion of these to duty at all their posts, and the unimpeachable authority under which it claims to perform all its spiritual functions. The Churches that like Rome least have

not been able to devise any methods of making progress unknown to her. The sails of the various crafts that are on their voyage over the modern spiritual sea have all been set after the same fashion. Rome's arrogance towards rivals may breed rancour; the Latin readiness to do what has to be done in the best way possible can only excite emulation. The Church of the West seemed to have received its death-stroke when it lost the allegiance of the German races. The great work of Ranke has made it plain to those slowest of belief that this misfortune was the occasion of such energy being put forth in new and old channels as had not been manifested even in the Church's best days. The different estimates of the Church's vigour formed when the wounds inflicted were still fresh, and two hundred years later when these were healed, may be given in the form of two familiar quotations. Bunyan says of Giant Pope: 'Though he be yet alive, he is, by reason of age, and also of the many shrewd brushes that he met with in his younger days, grown so crazy, and stiff in his joints, that he can now do little more than sit in his cave's mouth, grinning at pilgrims as they go by.' Macaulay says of the Church of Rome: 'When we reflect on the tremendous assaults she has survived, we find it difficult to conceive in what way she is to perish;' and, 'She saw the commencement of all the governments and all the ecclesiastical establishments that now exist in the world; and we feel no assurance that she is not destined to see the end of them all.' An attempt to forecast the future is, happily for us, not a part of our task.



I have hitherto spoken of the Church of the West mainly as a marvel of adaptive power and practical energy. Amid the convulsions of society, the intrigues of courts, and the schemes of rivals, she has always quickly learned how to find a leading place. It would be a great mistake if we set down this success to sagacity and promptitude only. An institution that has played such a prominent part during one of the most important epochs in the history of the world must have something in it besides active agents and ready wit. Behind the various manifestations of activity there must be a unifying and controlling power.

(1.) If the hostile critic finds in this Church no higher principle of union than the desire for self-aggrandizement a more impartial observer of human nature by searching deeper will discover in its guides the conviction that it is in some real sense the custodian of the truth. The Church of Rome became the mistress of men's souls, not only because she was held to be the guardian of 'the faith once delivered to the saints,' but also because she laid claim to a divine commission by which she alone can explain, expand, multiply, and apply the articles of faith according to human needs. The strength of the organisation has resided not least in its creed. What is the creed of the Latin Church? If it is answered, 'The creed of universal Christendom,' there is a sense in which the reply is just. The narrowness of the exceptions taken by the Greek Communion, always coming back to '*filioque*,' proves the case in that direction. The scrupulous care with which the rebels against her authority guarded against mutilating the ancient symbols of the

faith proves it in other connections. But, on the other hand, the creed by which the Church made the fears and hopes of mankind the instruments of her will cannot be held to be those summaries, known by venerable names, with which all Christians are familiar. The claim of right that has never been waived to add indefinitely to the articles of religion has been at the same time the Church's strength and weakness. That policy which has procured for enterprising statesmen the name of 'opportunists' has usually found favour at Rome. And expansions of the faith have not always been made according to the rules of logic, nor as following precedent, nor even as commending themselves to the eternal fitness of things. It has too often been thought sufficient to discover a disposition to accept a new doctrine, and a prospect of some immediate gain by its recognition. The theory that the Church is the interpreter of the Divine Will silences cavils and smothers doubt. In our own time we have heard of the publication of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception, and considering the slight consequences that have followed this publication, one may be tempted to think that such playing with sacred truth is less dangerous than it ought to be. The Latin Church acquired its strength, or apparent strength, not least from its tender dealing with the prejudices and delusions of mankind ; it lost its hold on their affections in a great measure from its indifference to the truth as such. In this respect it has proved itself the true child of the Roman state whose place in the world it took. Toleration of religious differences was one source of the great success of Rome as a coloniser. The conquered might continue to

worship their own gods in peace ; the conqueror would not refuse to these deities a place in the Pantheon. So from the same temper of mind it came about that the seal of God's messengers was set on the conception of hell as formed from Jewish, Pagan, Christian, and Teutonic notions, the hell of which Dante became the topographer, and which he brought so near the living world as to make it almost a part of it. Thus too, Purgatory grew to be a necessity, as has been well said,<sup>1</sup> 'from the mercy and modesty of the priesthood,' though it soon degenerated into a means for practising wicked extortion. The Holy Trinity and the Queen of heaven, one might say from feelings of decency, were lifted up to a height of serene grandeur. There was no fit place for such majestic Beings in regions that swarmed with demons, saints, and angels, all engaged in ceaseless conflict for men's souls. Priests were necessary to be intermediate between these beings and men, and masses, pilgrimages, fastings, the adoration of reliques, became the natural acts of a religious life. In the childhood of the world as revealed in the legends of Greece every fountain, stream, and forest had its nymph, every town its own protecting deity ; when Western Europe was in its childhood, it may be that it too must needs have passed through a similar phase in offering special supplications to the tutelary guardians of individuals and of places. The Church may have been for a time helpless amid the prevalence of such fancies, but the charge against her is not her powerlessness in this respect, but that she tolerated, and more, fostered, and yet worse, made base profit out of such morbid

<sup>1</sup> Milman.

imaginations. It is nothing to the point to say that little of what has been named can be ranked as among the essentials of the Church's faith. It is enough that in the absence of canonical enactment there has been a tacit acceptance of such a creed by priest as well as by people. The Latin Church owed much of its material prosperity to its readiness to fall in with the ways of grovelling superstition. Perhaps we should not be very severe on its evident reluctance to disown such ways even now, since such a breaking with the past as this implies might be regarded as a serious detraction from her primitive and mediæval splendour.

(2.) The officials by whom the Church was served next claim our attention. The division of all mankind into two classes, clergy and laity, is a marked feature in the polity of the Church. It shows very distinctly a strong characteristic of Latin methods. Any originality that is found in the conception of the Latin Priesthood lies in its adaptation to the uses for which it was designed, for it is but a selection of the elements pertaining to the priestly office as held among all peoples. The Roman Pontiff is there, uniting in a vague way the functions of civil magistrate and of God's interpreter; the Jewish priest is there, consecrated and set apart for holy duties that no man might take upon himself; the Christian minister is there, replenished with Divine grace, bound to think himself greatest when he is the servant of all. Graded with the nicest precision, enlarged so as to correspond with the growth of society, modified so as to suit every social development, recruited from all ranks, so that mean or noble birth was a thing of no account,

prevented from growing into a hereditary caste, using amid the dialects of different lands the same language in daily intercourse and in performing public functions, recognising obedience to their superiors as the first principle of their order, containing in their number, down till recent times, all the scholars of their age, the priests formed a commonwealth among the nations that could not but rule, notwithstanding glaring faults and inconsistencies. If their aims and motives were wholly pure, they would, as a duty, cling tenaciously to their privileges; if these were corrupt, they would cling to them more tenaciously still. What the clergy, regular and secular, accomplished in their best days in christianising and civilising the dwellers in city, forest, plain, and marsh, can hardly be over estimated; what they became in their worst days has been made only too plain by the revelations of history not impugned by the authorities of the Church itself.<sup>1</sup> What they might yet accomplish if the old ideal were before them, and the terrible warnings of the past attended to, it would be unsafe to predict. The belief that the priest ordained with an unction from on high, is invested with spiritual power denied to his unconsecrated fellow-mortal, is not eradicated from the mind of our race. Protestants still act upon it, and little coteries that denounce all priestly usurpation still draw the sources of their life from it in some disguised form. Let us not sup-

<sup>1</sup> A sentence from the report of a council of select Cardinals to Paul III. in 1538, quoted by Ranke, may serve as a specimen of the evidence that might be adduced on this point :—‘What a spectacle does this desolation of the Church present to one who travels over the Christian world! All the shepherds have abandoned their flocks, and have left them to the care of hirelings.’

pose that by formally denouncing priestcraft we have pronounced the condemnation of the Latin Church. Let us own, too, that the clumsy imitations under which we sometimes try to hide the deformities of the Latin priesthood in our Protestant Churches are by no means an unqualified success. Our accommodations to the prejudices of the world are not in themselves a whit more worthy than was the falling in with the temper of the times by the priest of the middle ages, only the moral tone of the community is higher now than it was then. It would be most unfair not to allow that, in past times as well as now, there have been and are priests who have reached as near the ideal of priesthood as frail man can be expected to do. And if it be granted that a separate order of priests is permissible, the Latin form must not be condemned because of the strictness of the rules which guard its ranks. For such a task as the regeneration of a world it is not, on the face of it, an extravagant demand that there should be a class of men set apart from the world, denied the endearments of wife and child, devoted to prayer for themselves and others, trained to the right performance of the offices of piety and religion. Yet this is nearly all that the ideal of Latin priesthood amounts to. And it is not to be doubted that there has been a widely-spread conviction in all ages that God's presence and blessing would be vouchsafed to such, in a measure that would keep them in the right way. The stern truths of history have, however, made very many incredulous. Men of God, claiming immunities as such, have too often come to seek their ends by worldly methods. Their ends as temporal and as eternal have grown to

be indistinguishable. That the Master should have intended that any official should stand between man and his Maker is incredible. That the Church of Christ should be held to mean only the clergy is intolerable.

(3.) The *regular* clergy, as distinguished from the *secular*, deserve special attention on account of the influence they have had in the Church. A Regular is one whose life is guided by the *regula*, or *rule*, of the order to which he belongs; a Secular is one whose duty lies mainly among the workers of the world, for whose sake he performs the beneficent offices of the Church; but the latter word seems to have come into use mainly by way of contrast to the other more definite appellation. The origin of parochial establishments, the various grades of officials connected with these, the social and domestic habits of the clergy, the enforcement of celibacy, and the change that thereby passed over the priesthood, indicate a field for observation which cannot now be entered. A parish priest, with a home and household of his own like those of the members of the flock to which he ministered, belongs only to the primitive times of the Latin Church; the gradual assimilation of the one order to the other in some important particulars shows clearly which of the two types was the stronger. The 'detachment' of its priests from the affairs of the world has been in the councils of Rome a matter of pride as well as of policy. Other churches have had cast round them a halo of sanctity by the cultivation of the spirit of asceticism; the Latin Church alone, while not repressing this spirit, was successful for a long time *in giving* it a practical turn.

Nothing is more certain than that monasticism as a system did not begin on Italian or European soil. It has flourished in Eastern lands from times so remote that it may be regarded as indigenous there, and its formal introduction into the West is one of the familiar facts of history. Athanasius, the companion of St. Anthony in the African desert, became in the year 341 in Rome the apostle and advocate of an austere and separate life, and before the close of the fourth century not only did the isles on the neighbouring coast swarm with colonies of devotees, but conventual institutions abounded in city, province, and island over the whole empire. The adherents of the old culture viewed with amazement the infatuation which had seized on multitudes of their fellows: they regarded them with feelings akin to the pitying horror with which men of a later time have beheld the victims of some newly imported Asiatic plague. It was said: 'They fear the gifts of fortune from their apprehension of losing them, and lest they should be miserable, they embrace a life of voluntary wretchedness.'<sup>1</sup> It is true that the self-devotion of one of these fanatics touched the right chord that was now in many hearts waiting to be struck, and that a monk by the sacrifice of his own life brought to an end the inhuman butcheries of the arena. But such isolated benefits would be thought dearly purchased by the ever present risk of faction and mob-rule that the monks were promoting in the new capital of the East. The Latin Church had never to proceed to the extremity of proclaiming, as its rival did, the suppression of all monasticism, as being a too unruly

<sup>1</sup> Rutilius.



element within it;<sup>1</sup> it succeeded in keeping the manifestation of monkish fervour within due bounds: it accomplished yet more, for under sagacious management, monasticism became 'the guardian of what was valuable, the books and arts of the old world; the missionary of what was holy and Christian in the new civilisation; the chief maintainer, if not the restorer of agriculture in Italy; the cultivator of the forests and morasses of the north; the apostle of the heathen that dwelt beyond the pale of the Roman empire.'<sup>2</sup>

A system which took such ferocious aspects when adopted by Orientals, whether Pagan, Mohammedan, Jewish, or Christian, had to undergo many modifications as it became the Church's agent in Europe. Self-consecration must be present in all its forms as the ground idea, but the paths towards perfection that have been chosen diverge widely. There is a great difference between the ostentatious self-torture of the Eastern, and the stern, secret self-flagellation of the Western ascetic. A Simon Stylites could scarcely captivate the hearts of those who revered a Martin of Tours. The influences of climate and of race must be credited with a large portion of the new manifestations of the religious life, but there still remains the fact that the heads of the Latin Church did not hold up the unattainable as something to be

<sup>1</sup> There were bulls promulgated by Innocent x. in 1649 and in 1652 which may seem to be aimed at all monasteries. But only those that were broken down with poverty were to be suppressed, and even this was not attempted till the system had come to be regarded with contempt, and convents were acknowledged to be in many instances 'mere asylums for licentiousness and crime.'—*Ranke*, Book viii.

<sup>2</sup> *Milman*.

vainly strained after. The scanty morsel on which the anchorite of the burning sands could sustain life ceased to be the rule for the Western monks long before their orders were demoralised by the luxury which became at length a by-word against them, and contributed materially to their decline. It was the toleration of habits for which there was no precedent in the previous course of monastic life, and the encouragement of activity on new paths that opened as unfamiliar circumstances arose in the lapse of ages, that gave scope for energy that otherwise might have spent itself in hindering rather than in helping the Church's progress. Jealousy and strife there have frequently been between the two clerical orders, but that chronic state of dissatisfaction with which the white clergy of the Greek Church view the black clergy has never prevailed. Monks have often mounted the papal throne, and have signalled their reign by favouring the order from whose ranks they emerged, but the Western Church has always been able to exhibit itself as something greater than monasticism.

The happy faculty, already mentioned as a characteristic of the Latin race, of turning to good account the diverse traits of national and individual life may find illustration in this connection. The Mariolatry that is favoured in the churches of the East and of the West has undoubtedly helped to develop gross forms of superstition in both. But there is a vast difference between the ardour excited in a Russian peasant by an eikon of the Virgin carried in front of his regiment, and the romantic attachment of a devout Catholic to the mother of Jesus; it is the

difference between the worship of a fetish, and that of a high ideal of purity. We can scarcely conceive of the chivalrous Franks in their rudest days satisfying themselves with the grovelling adoration that pleases the illiterate Russian. The 'Ave Maria' of the knight had a ring about it that touched his serfs and retainers, and which not seldom finds a kind of response even in Protestant breasts. For there is something about it which, though not conveyed to it under the *imprimatur* of Councils, has still been fostered by the Church when it has given encouragement to monastic life. It carries back our thoughts first to old Rome where the title of Matron was the most honourable that a patrician lady could bear, and where the ambition to obtain this acted, in addition to the loose morality of many, so as to render it difficult often to make up the slender number of six virgins needed to complete the vestal college; and then onward to Christian Rome where women of noble and devout cast found in Mary a new ideal that united in itself the highest type of mother and of maid. Such, in their endeavours after a holy life, sought to live by *rule* also; they emulated the other sex in their numbers and in their austerity, and the Church was far from forbidding them. But even this might have proved only a passing phase of fashion had not the Teutonic race, whose feelings about the place of women had grown into instincts, asserted itself within the new kingdom for which all were blindly working. Roman dignity, German modesty, Christian chastity—here are three qualities worthy of being united. Take into account the Mohammedan world, supposed to make light of all

these, eager to subjugate Christendom, and more than once apparently on the eve of succeeding, and you lift monasticism out of the rank of mere Church systems and see it as one of the powers of the world. For it was by means of it that the Church cultivated the highest type of life which it was able to see, made men and women willing to try to live such a life and to die rather than mar its purity, inflamed the minds of even the worldly with zeal for Christ, preached the necessity of crusades, led armies against the infidel, and finally rolled back the tide of conquest all but completely from the coasts of Europe. Monasticism, worship of the Virgin, chivalry may have no necessary connection among themselves, but it is only by understanding their bearing on each other that we perceive how the strength of Europe was marshalled against that of Asia, and triumphed.

When the middle of the sixteenth century had been reached the work of monasticism was done, and its good name lost. With great skill the capabilities of the separate orders had been directed towards separate channels, so that strife might not be engendered by unwholesome rivalry. The unhappy condition which in other churches is deplored under the name of 'overlapping' (though critics might be pardoned if they called it by a harsher name) was by the exercise of central authority carefully guarded against. Thus one fraternity exhausted its energies in attending to schools, while another devoted itself to the building of churches, and another occupied itself in founding and supporting hospitals. But the most anxious supervision could not perpetuate a system from which the spirit to which it owed its

origin had departed. Again and again attempts were made to restore the lost primitive simplicity of life and of aim that had been the strength of the various orders, but always in vain. The wealth of the great establishments excited powerful enemies, while the calling of a monk came to be held in universal contempt. There is no need to quote from the literature of Reformation times in order to prove the utter degradation of monastic life. Clever satirists doubtless exaggerated for political purposes, and zealous reformers may have disregarded truth in their wish to make black the pictures they drew, but the corrupt state of the whole system is confessed by those who would willingly be its defenders. Not only in Germany and in Britain was there a determination to shake off all priestly fetters, but in Southern Europe too the condemnation of monastic life was unmistakable. Communities arose in Italy calling themselves *regular*, but disowning the habits of monks, and including secular priests among their members. Such names as *Barnabites* and *Theatines* would be more familiar to us had there not arisen a society akin to them in some respects, which overtook more than the task they proposed for themselves, and whose fame has eclipsed them all. The Order of Jesus is not a fraternity of monks, not even of clergy, but during a most critical period in the history of the Latin Church it has served for both a brain and a right hand to that church. The name of Jesuit has long inspired respect, awe, fear, and detestation in different minds, according to the point of view from which Jesuitical actions have been regarded. It is hopeless for us now to think of either justifying or

explaining these mental attitudes. Let the mention of the name only serve as another indication of the marvellous flexibility of that ecclesiastical organisation which could find a place and a use within it for every form of self-devotion, provided only that it yielded obedience, from the solitary hermit in his mountain cell, to the sworn servant who in the fulfilment of his duty abjures every visible token that usually marks the spiritual functionary.

(4.) It is now necessary to advert to the forms of worship favoured by the Latin Church. The most powerful guild of officials enforcing such a creed as has been indicated would have made little way had there not been at their disposal some means of reaching the soul through the senses. In fact ritual went before creed. The Church first fascinated or awed men by the beauty and sublimity of her services, and then set forth the significance of these. It was not her favourite method to win them by the simple story of the gospel, and then to ask their aid in building a house of prayer. She instituted her shrines, simple or grand, and invited men to partake of the benefits derived from the prayers offered there, and when they were impressed with the mystery that clung to the worship, she then instructed them, more or less fully, in the facts on which it rested.<sup>1</sup> In this Church 'organisation preceded distinctness in faith. She distilled her dogmas from her ritual.'<sup>2</sup> The endless doctrinal controversies into which the whole Christian

<sup>1</sup> The case of Clovis may serve as an illustration. It was *after* his baptism that the famous outburst took place: 'Si ego ibidem cum Francis meis fuissetem, injurias ejus vindicassetem.'

<sup>2</sup> R. H. Hutton, *Essays*, i. 335.

Church had been drawn through the predominance of the Greek intellect were brought to an end when the Latin genius gained the ascendant ; the resumption of these studies after another fashion by the schoolmen opened the way which led to her decline.

For purposes of general teaching, the Church during a long period depended on its ritual rather than on preaching. But if the name *Evangelical*, accepted in some portions of modern Churches, be justified by the prominence given there to the central fact of the Gospel history—the sacrificial death of Christ—then the Church of Rome may be held entitled to the same description from the position given to this in its ritual. In the Roman liturgy the ‘Canon of the Mass’ is the unchangeable part, and it is of unquestionable antiquity. So far as regards manuscript authority, it has as ancient a date as the oldest written copies of Scripture. From the days of Gregory (590) its history is plain ; in a briefer form it can be traced back to Gelasius (492), and to Leo (451). When the time of Innocent I. is reached (402-417), we lose ourselves in the haze of tradition, and find the name of St. Peter invoked to compensate for the absence of precise information.<sup>1</sup> Under such sanctions do Latin priests still offer the venerable prayers of their Church that embody their conception of the sacrifice offered on Calvary, through which alone their other multifarious petitions are rendered possible.

In no respect has the revolt against the authority of Rome been more marked than in the detestation with which, among some sections of Protestants,

<sup>1</sup> ‘Quis enim nescit, aut non advertat id quod a principe Apostolorum Petro Romanae Ecclesiae traditum est?’—*Letter of Pope Innocent.*

priestly vestments have been regarded. The distinctive garb of a priest has not unnaturally been looked on as a sure index of the hated priestly character. But there is no good ground for regarding the use of vestments as peculiarly popish, or as a Roman invention. The Latin Church only developed for its own purposes the usages which in this respect it found in the religion which it embraced. Thus we read of Constantine in 330 presenting the Bishop of Jerusalem with a gold-embroidered robe. There is no reason to suppose that there was any innovation implied in such a gift, and apparel of a similar kind is mentioned both by Chrysostom and by Athanasius. If Rome be the proper heir<sup>1</sup> of Jerusalem then there is a sufficient explanation of her appreciation of gorgeous vestments, and her employment of these has certainly been intended to serve a more practical purpose than merely to feed the personal vanity of the wearers of them.

It has been made a serious charge against the public worship of the Latin Church that it is dangerous to true spirituality by the undue cultivation of its 'sensuous' side. That its strict formality, its elaborate music, and its processional hymns chanted as silver crosses, banners, relics, and the host are borne along, are far removed from apostolic customs, will hardly be denied. The 'psalms and hymns and spiritual songs' which in the apostles' days comforted the hearts of the faithful were necessarily sung with much simpler accompaniments. So too it must have been later, when, as Pliny writes, the Christians 'met together before dawn and sang a hymn to Christ as God.' But the

<sup>1</sup> Renan.



natural recourse to music as an aid to common worship is thus completely vindicated as a Christian custom, and there is no principle violated in the endeavour to wed together solemn words and suitable sounds in the most artistic and impressive manner. There was a period when in the Latin Church the officials called *Psalmistae* seem to have discharged precisely the same function as was assigned to the *Precentor* in our national Church. Ambrose believed he was making an improvement when he introduced the responsive service which grew in favour and became associated with the name of Gregory, who exercised so great an influence on the forms of the Church's service. There must have been a richness about these responses that was absent from the simple chants of the *Psalmistae*, when Ambrose says: 'From the responses of the psalms and the singing of men, women, maidens, and children there results a harmonious sound like the waves of the sea.' The extent to which musical art may be safely employed in public worship is not a subject that we are called on to discuss, and it is a matter that must be settled by reason and experience rather than by appeals to Scripture. But the world has no cause to lament that the Church of Rome found a place for the tuneful brethren, as she did for other artists, within her walls.

(5.) The need for compression in the treatment of this illimitable subject has been apparent from the first, and it grows more clamant as the necessity arises for a selection from among the many visible signs with which the Church sought to obtain attention for her message. The Church, as a building, may

serve as a type of the symbolic agencies by which men's minds were impressed with thoughts about God and duty. The offices of the Church could indeed be performed under the meanest conditions, but they were not worthily performed except in circumstances as sublime and solemn as man's mind could devise. For twelve centuries the Church occupied herself in covering Europe with edifices that still stand to attest the greatness of the conception she had formed of her mission as well as of the wealth and influence at her command. The Abbey churches, roofless and ruined, placed in spots where nature shows all her charms, are indeed proof that the day of these is gone by. Even though they were restored by loving hands, there is seldom a population round them to be summoned to prayer, and Protestantism has seen good reason to disapprove of persons retiring into seclusion for the purpose of self-purification through acts of devotion and self-sacrifice. A committee of the General Assembly with its Convener represents in our days the community of monks with their abbot, so far as missionary work is concerned.

In towns where the demolition or entire neglect of great churches would have been wanton, and wasteful too, those who came to use them strove, with some success, to obliterate all the traces of their first designers and previous occupiers. But the glory and beauty of the so-called Gothic churches have touched many hearts not willingly open to their influences. Yet this going back as far as may be now to the original design of pious builders is no mark of a return to Romanism ; it is only the return of human nature, long due after its violent expulsion. If we

look for an emblem of that blend of blood and spirit out of which the pioneers of modern civilisation have been formed, we shall find none better than the mediæval Christian Cathedral. The daring energy of the Teuton, the disciplined skill of the Latin, the elevating doctrines of the faith that bound them together, may all be deciphered there. The Tedesco has for long been regarded as an unwelcome visitor on the south of the Alps, but it was he who laid the foundation of the temporal power when in the person of Pepin the younger he handed over to the successor of St. Peter, instead of to the Emperor of the East, the Exarchate wrested from the Lombards. When, too, in the days of Charlemagne the Pope had become a member of the Frank Empire, and schools for Franks and Saxons were established in Rome, the Latin capital was declared to be almost germanised. Hence the skill and energy combined that recrossed the Alps, and have helped to shape the character of the West.

It is not then by an effort of the mere fancy that we read in the features of a great Christian Church how God has worked out the destinies of Europe, and thus of the future ages of the world. The untrained eye and the untutored mind can there discern and understand the keystone of the whole building—the Roman arch tapered into a form familiar to the inhabitants of forest lands,—arch on arch reared on high proclaiming the infinite majesty of Him in whose honour the fane is raised. Aloft the normal three towers indicate the mystic three of the Godhead, while the rose-window asserts their unity. The Latin cross gives to the edifice its form. The altar

removed from the gaze of worshippers by the long vista that conceals as much as it reveals the mysterious rites performed there, is the sign of the perpetual presence of the Church's Lord. Underneath, from the gloomy crypt, the voices of the dead seem to mingle with the invocations that rise from above them in behalf of both living and dead. Music as an art gains a new inspiration as its solemn notes peal in the vaulted roof where the smoke of the incense curls, betokening the heart's oblation. The chancel is the spot reserved for the consecrated class, without whom the heavens over the whole world would be as brass; the nave, the porches, the open spaces are the resort of all for devotion, business, pleasure, where they can muse on the mysteries of the world's faith, embodied before their eyes in a splendid unity of imperishable stone, or read carved in figures, graceful and grotesque, the legends of saints and martyrs, the sculptured stories of the stirring events in which they or their fathers have borne a part, and the doom of bliss or of woe that awaits prince, priest, noble, and peasant, in the regions beyond the grave, the entrance to which is regulated by the guardians of the sacred building. Men, we know, when the spell was broken, flocked to such churches, and hung with rapt attention on the lips of preachers who denounced all priestly authority. It became a sin to heed such sermons as the dumb stones had preached in former days. But the change in the mood of men's minds was no sign of a change in human nature. The account of what a great Latin Church might have suggested to those who viewed it is not the account of the thoughts and feelings it

actually evoked : for the direction taken by national movements is determined by the experiences of real life, as much as by aspirations after the ideal. And it is not to be doubted that those who beheld those churches thought more about imposture, and hypocrisy, and self-seeking, and vice too manifest in the lives of the masters of the edifices, than of the solemn doctrines and the pure precepts of which they were the sworn upholders. So it came about that the strongest races of Europe renounced their allegiance to the forms under which they had been christianised, and the Church of the Latins has been left to work out its destined course among and by those who through language and affinity were prevented from joining in the great protest against its ways.

I have striven to be fair in my imperfect review of the history, policy, and claims of this great Church, but it is not to be supposed that our Protestant point of view could be satisfactory to a zealous Catholic. It cannot harm us if for a moment we try to look at things from his position. 'All who take part with the Apostle are on the winning side. He has long since given warrants for the confidence which he claims. From the first he has looked through the wide world of which he has the burden ; and, according to the need of the day and the inspirations of his Lord, he has set himself now to one thing, now to another : but to all in season, and to nothing in vain. He came first upon an age of refinement and luxury like our own, and, in spite of the persecutor, fertile in the resources of his cruelty, he soon gathered out of all classes of society, the slave, the soldier, the *high-born* lady, and the sophist, materials enough to

form a people to his Master's honour. The savage hordes came down in torrents from the north, and Peter went out to meet them, and by his very eye he sobered them, and backed them in their full career. They turned aside, and flooded the whole earth, but only to be more surely civilised by him, and to be made ten times more his children even than the older populations which they had overwhelmed. Lawless kings arose, sagacious as the Roman, passionate as the Hun; yet in him they found their match, and were shattered, and he lived on. The gates of the earth were opened to the east and west, and men poured out to take possession; but he went with them by his missionaries, to China, to Mexico, carried along by zeal and charity, as far as those children of men were led by enterprize, covetousness, or ambition. Has he failed in his successes up to this hour? Did he, in our fathers' day, fail in his struggle with Joseph of Germany and his confederates, with Napoleon, a greater name, and his dependent kings, that, though in another kind of fight, he should fail in ours? What grey hairs are on the head of Judah, whose youth is renewed like the eagle's, whose feet are like the feet of harts, and underneath the everlasting arms?' Thus does a gifted apologist pour forth his earnest, glowing words.<sup>1</sup>

Historically the Latin Church must be treated as a human institution, and

'This is the moral of all human tales,  
'Tis but the same rehearsal of the past.  
First Freedom, and then Glory; when that fails,  
Wealth, Vice, Corruption,—Barbarism at last.

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<sup>1</sup> Cardinal Newman, *The Idea of a University*, p. 13.

And history with all her volume vast  
Hath but one tale.'

Yet, the poet's path to ruin has not all been trodden in this case. The stages from freedom to corruption can be easily traced, but the issue has not been barbarism. If this mighty institution has escaped the fate that has overtaken all Empires, may the explanation not be that there is something in it that was wanting in the more vulgar despotisms that have perished according to rule? The divine part in man and society is not killed by the base matter in which it inheres. Let us not deny to the parent of all the Western Churches the possession of the true germ of heavenly life, lest by such denial we help to cut away the only standing-ground from which either Protestant or Catholic can proclaim God's loving message to a selfish and sinful world.



## ST. GILES' LECTURES.

*FOURTH SERIES—THE CHURCHES OF CHRISTENDOM.*

*LECTURE VI.*

### THE CHURCH OF THE WALDENSES.


By the Rev. A. K. H. BOYD, D.D., First Minister of St. Andrews.

I WILL confess to you that I was not specially interested in the Waldensian Church when I undertook to tell you about it. The brave little communion has occasionally suffered from its advocates in these last years. I have known the terrible word *Bore* applied to it by certain folk who thought its claims had been urged on them with undue pertinacity and frequency. And I have heard the privations of its pastors expatiated on in a fashion which created a smile. A recent zealous pleader for these good men, who unhappily lacked the sense of humour, continually urged their scanty supply of what he called *Butcher's Meat*. And why a little Italian sect should somehow always have cast itself upon the pecuniary help of other people, expecting us to endow



its teachers, was not clear. *Fear God, and take your own part*, was esteemed by a late eccentric genius as summing all a Christian man's work here. But these Waldensian pastors, though doubtless fearing God, have steadily and long looked that those whom it might concern should help to support them.

You will understand that I am not here as an advocate, but (in a humble way) as a historian. I am not going to deliver to you, under the name of a lecture, what might properly go into the *Missionary Record*. But I honestly believe that to tell you the plain truth about the Church of the Waldenses will greatly increase your interest in it. It is, in great part, a tragic story. And many, not much given to the study of church history, have been stirred by Milton's grand sonnet, which is far too familiar for quotation here. There is something, too, in the scenery amid which all these things were done and suffered : the little valleys, shut in by the Alpine peaks and snows. The surroundings beseem the unforgettable events. It is wonderful, indeed, how little these have been named by such as have written concerning the Waldenses. But ecclesiastical history, as told by those who wrote it, has been singularly devoid of real life : till Dean Stanley showed that an ancient Council could be made as life-like as the last General Assembly, and a hundred times as interesting. Let us keep always in mind the snowy Alps as the background, and the little green valleys,—the longest of these but twenty miles in length : the little valleys whose stagnant atmosphere has sometimes made strange unhealthy bodies ; and oddly strung minds too.



I suppose that in divers Christian communions, very much smaller than the great Roman organisation, there are to be found men who are distinctly *Of the Opposition* to the ways of the body to which they belong : who distrust and dislike those generally regarded as its leaders ; and absolutely refuse to be led, intellectually, morally, or spiritually, by these outstanding persons : who discern clearly the manifold evils of the system and of its working, and who sometimes say they do. In these days such recalcitrant and mutinous individuals (who may be very wise and far-seeing and good, or very narrow and stupid and unamiable) will probably be subjected to the mild martyrdom of being occasionally misrepresented and abused : but in any case it is impossible that they should be burnt.

We are, accordingly, quite prepared to believe that in the great Roman Church, even before by the accretion of manifold unscriptural and absurd errors, not one of which, once taken up, could ever be dropt, but must of necessity be maintained as right by a Church claiming to be Infallible, there were many, here and there, who would (in their secret soul) not be cowed into conformity : who would not pretend to believe what they saw was false, or to approve what they felt was wrong. Such men had indeed to be cautious. They spoke and acted with the rope round their necks. The fagots were ready ; and there were great men in the Church who, while acknowledging the moral worth of the heretic, frankly declared that all that only made him the more dangerous, and made it the more needful that he should be blotted out. Rabelais concealed the true tendency of his writings in a very foul cloud.

With all due remembrance of his living admirers, the strongest word is not too strong to express the moral character of the pages in which he attacked Roman error in belief and life. Then, in this place and that, as the hands that never could be washed grew always dirtier, as the evils of the system gradually but steadily grew a greater offence to common sense and common conscience, a voice was lifted up in protest : a voice that long anticipated the ringing tones of Luther.

But, of course, there were great and wealthy folk interested in maintaining all those errors and abuses. There were good and quiet men, really in fear of what might follow if the hand were once laid on the malignant cancer which they plainly saw. It is hard for us, now, to reckon how brave a man he was who dared to attack the mighty Roman Hierarchy, even with God's truth at his back : nearly as hard as to realise the meaning of such a story as that, in twelve months, a hundred and thirty heretics were burnt to ashes in this or that little town. Some of us, sitting by the glowing winter fireside, have tried, not morbidly, but to understand what has come to thousands of our fellow-creatures, to think what it would be to be burnt to death. It was a vain endeavour. Yet let it be remembered, that if the accursed Inquisition burnt its thousands, the minutes of a Scotch Presbytery bear that at a certain stage the business was adjourned, that the members might go and see three witches burnt. The grotesqueness of the story hides the horror of it. But the unspeakable and unimaginable horror is there. I believe that it is with entire truth Cardinal Newman says that it would have been the death of him to see just one poor mortal burnt alive.

We are not concerned to-day to think of witnesses for truth in other places, or of what befel them : possibly inflicted as much from frantic terror as from infernal cruelty : as when Southern Americans struck down an abolitionist, or burnt a refractory slave. But in the valleys, four in number, running out of the plain of Piedmont into the Cottian Alps, there dwelt, from very early times, a simple and uncultured race, who began by aiming at a holier and stricter life than that exemplified by the priesthood. Their story has been told by men who disliked them ; and, as we can see, very unfairly told. But it may be gathered that they were people of humble origin and pursuits, with no outstanding great men among them : very conscientious and sincere : doubtless somewhat narrow and ignorant : and quite possibly believing very strange and absurd statements about the Roman Church, even as in some parts of the Highlands wonderful things are believed still, by some, about the Church of Scotland. They existed in many places, these Puritans of the earliest time, under the name of the *Cathari*. Gradually, they grew into a body in so far organised, having its head-quarters in the valleys of the Piedmontese Alps ; and bearing the name of the *Waldenses* : of which name more hereafter. They were at first, and for long, no more than a school of earnest people within the Roman Church, as the Wesleyans long afterwards in the Anglican. And when, going beyond the care of their own spiritual life, they went on to think of the things of other men, the end they contemplated was Reformation within the Church, and not by any means going forth from it. It is hard to say how early these Valley-men

began to assert their individuality and their views of the Christian life : but it is certain that the time came when by the name of Waldenses those were generally denoted who, over a large tract of Southern Europe, protested against the corruptions of the Roman Church, the scandalous wealth and luxury of the Bishops, and the moral degeneracy of the priesthood. Not merely the *Vallenses* proper, the dwellers in those valleys in the Alpine range which bounds Piedmont on the North, and which preserves the name of a certain forgotten Cottius who once reigned over a small tract there ; but all the *Cathari*, which word conveys generally the people who claimed to be stricter than their neighbours, those Methodists of the Latin Church, were commonly, by the eleventh century, known as the *Waldenses*. And gradually those who were by emphasis the *Vallenses*, the Vaudois, the Valley-people, came to hold views which caused their practical separation from the Church of Italy around them.

But whence come these two names, which apparently may be used interchangeably, the *Vallenses* and the *Waldenses* ? Is the derivation of both the same : and do they each express the alleged fact, that this earliest dawn of a Reformation originated in these valleys of the Cottian Alps ? Here we step among the embers of keen controversy. For while those who hold the more heroic theory of the origin of the Waldensian church maintain that the simple people of these valleys never accepted Papal error ; that they were a pure primitive Church, dating from Apostolic times, which never went wrong nor needed reformation ; that during the severities of the ten

early persecutions, many believers sought a retreat in those remote recesses of the Alps, and there retained their integrity age after age ; and that their numbers were increased, time after time, through religious movements originated by divers good men, notable among whom were Claude of Turin, and a certain Peter Waldo of Lyons : others hold that this Peter Waldo, the merchant of Lyons, was in fact the founder of the Communion which, bearing his name, came to be called the Waldensian Church. There does not seem to have been anything individual in Waldo's teaching. He appears to have been a good and zealous man, who grieved over the manifold corruptions of the Papal system ; and who desired to go back for Christian truth to the New Testament, and to reject all in the doctrine of the Roman Church which was without authority there. It is certain, too, that his beliefs did not begin with himself. He did no more than energetically set forth what he had learnt from some who went before him. It seems certain, likewise, that he came into such relations with these Valley Christians as to add to their numbers and influence, and to confirm their convictions : and this to such a degree that he was widely regarded as in some sense their founder. Thus the Vallenses, the Christians of the Valleys, by an easy etymological transition, became the Waldenses, the disciples of Peter Waldo. And the name in any case, remained. Possibly the Valley Christians were properly called Waldenses only as the Christians of Scotland have generally been termed Calvinists ; not in the sense that either race owned any human master, or took their creed on his authority ; but only in the sense

that either race found in the system put in shape by this man and that, the system which came home to them as congenial, right and true.

I cannot pretend to feel any special interest in the controversy as to the origin of the Waldensian Church: and I purpose to give my little space to telling you strange things about it as to whose substantial truth there is no controversy. But the name of Waldo is in any case so linked with that of the Waldenses, that something further ought to be said of his history, and the method of his work and influence. And one has learned by much experience that in addressing a considerable congregation on such a subject as mine to-day, it is well to take for granted that they know little or nothing about it. Wherefore, let a word be said of this truly good and zealous man, whom some would make the spiritual father of the Waldenses, some their brother, and some their child.

His date was somewhere between 1160 and 1170. It was a season of considerable intellectual activity; many men, far apart, and quite independently of one another (as is the way in such matters) began to think. And the result of this thought was a rising in mind and profession and sometimes even in overt action, against the doctrines, the claims, and the ways of the Church of Rome. Some of these mutinous spirits, it cannot be denied (and we do not need to deny it), were very wild and extravagant in their views, and were quite ready to break asunder all moral restraints in their conduct. It is always so, in times of mental movement. One has known men ardently set on social and political reformation, who

were terribly disheartened and soured by just going to some public meeting, and seeing with what-like people they would have to be associated in working towards their desired ends. There were those, in that second half of the twelfth century, who were simple anti-sacerdotalists : who ventured to bring the priesthood's claim of miraculous power to the test of Scripture, or possibly only of common sense ; with the usual result. There were those who burst out into a wild denial of all that was generally believed among Christian men. Some went no further than speculation : some would carry their belief or want of belief into action. The strange spirit of Manichæism, that compound of Christianity and the ancient philosophy of the Persians, which had influenced many at intervals ever since the third century, was in the air. Its doctrines would take long to set forth ; but their outcome in practical duty was a severe austerity which would mortify the flesh and all its propensities as few have mortified it yet. Doubtless there was some political element leavening the views of many in those days of movement : and in many spirits, the wealth of the monastic establishments, and the princely habits of the chief in the hierarchy, had stirred the still-abiding feeling, so easily stirred by one who does not shrink from setting class against class, of the Poor towards the Rich. Let not any one doubt that the spirit is here. The pertinacity of the Waldenses in holding and suffering for doctrines which very many of those illiterate folk must have most imperfectly understood ; their inveterate dislike to Rome ; are in some measure explained by their enforced poverty : by the natural discontent of the very



poor in the sight of the ways of the very rich, which (believe one who knows) still abides both in town and country ; and which is the great coming peril of such a country as Britain, and of such a town as London.

In that season of stir and ferment, Peter Waldo was a rich merchant of Lyons. One desires, much, reading his story, that we could look more into the heart of the man, and make out his individuality. But, as with the Waldenses all through, we are obliged to be content with the outward events. They are recorded ; and from them we must judge. Yet, many a time, guessing at the man's heart from the outer current of his life, one recalls Walpole's sad statement, embodying his own experience of the errors of such as look on from the outside,—these as seen by one who for a time knew thoroughly the inner machinery : 'Do not read history to me,' said that unscrupulous ruler of England, 'for that, I know, must be false.' Waldo was rich, we do not know whether by labour or by inheritance : and no one living can clearly say what amount of worldly possession made a merchant rich in the twelfth century. He was a truly religious man, and we can make out that he was an impulsive one. At some devotional meeting, apparently not in church, a man, close by Waldo, was struck dead by lightning : and, thus startlingly taught how swiftly all the interests of this life might utterly cease for any human being, Waldo henceforward gave himself wholly to religion. He devoted himself to poverty, and to the religious instruction of his race. He distributed all his wealth in alms to the surrounding poor ; and they clung to him with grateful devotion. He was no scholar ; but

he was able to pay one to translate the Gospels into the vulgar tongue. And when disciples gathered about him, he sent them two and two (following an unforgettable example) to preach the gospel in the villages around.

These preachers would not be the less fitted for their work, for that they were of the humblest among men. *The Humbled*, indeed, was what they called themselves : others styled them the *Insabatati*, from the wooden shoes they wore ; and they were widely known as *The Poor Men of Lyons*. They seem, generally, to have been truly earnest and self-denying men. Going to many places, two of them arrived at Rome, carrying with them their translated portions of the Bible : notably, the Psalms, with a commentary on them. Pope Alexander IV. received them in the Lateran Council : he approved their poverty, as men sometimes approve in others which they have no intention to practise themselves ; but he forbade their preaching. The Poor Men of Lyons met little sympathy : but their knowledge of Scripture made them difficult folk to argue with. There was no purpose, so far, of separation from the Church ; and the Council, condemning divers heretics, did not name them. But the rift was there, the beginning of entire alienation ; and when the Archbishop of Lyons rigorously interdicted them from preaching, Waldo replied with the often-misused words, that *he must obey God rather than Man* ; and they took their place finally among the opponents of the Priesthood.

By natural steps, they grew ever more hostile to the Church which had proved such a step-mother to them. And, as has been with very many in analo-

gous circumstances, these views widened : they thought they saw farther the farther they went. They disowned the Priesthood, the Hierarchy : they denied any special worth in the Ritual of the Church. They declared that every virtuous layman was a priest : and they carried out that great Gospel doctrine as it is not carried out by such as profess it here, declaring that any such man, and even any such woman, might administer the Sacraments. Of course, something may be said for their views, by biblicists who are not scholars. And the Sacraments they received were but two : Baptism and Holy Communion. But with greater keenness than even doctrinal error, they protested against the wealth and power of the Church ; thus giving us a glimpse of what was within them. They rejected Prayers for the Dead, Festivals, Purgatory, Indulgences. Yet, though thus taking a position which made their contention with the Church internecine,—for one or other must perish, the issue was of life or death,—it is singular to find that not a word is said, even by those who tell the most inconceivable stories of the immoralities of other revolting sects, in accusation of the lives of the Poor Men of Lyons, or of the Waldenses with whom they speedily came to be identified. For natural affinity made the doctrines of Waldo acceptable to the frugal and poverty-pressed people of the Valleys. Here was the religion that suited their circumstances, their likes and their dislikes ; specially their dislikes, which are the strongest.

The outstanding characteristic of the Valley Christians, the Waldenses, as we now find them towards the close of the twelfth century, was their knowledge

of Scripture. They had the Gospels in their own tongue. In that tongue they offered their prayers. And the Priesthood around were specially ignorant and irreverent : exercising no influence. Gradually a religious literature came into being. The Provençal dialect, elsewhere given over to the songs of the Troubadours, was used, in the Valleys, in the treatment of spiritual topics ; and it came home to the hearts of the people like Gaelic to the Highlands. There is a famous treatise, which enthusiastic believers in the Waldenses would date in the year 1100, bearing the title of *The Noble Lesson* ; which has ever been prized among them as the Prayer-book or the *Christian Year* is by the devout Anglican, as the Catechism and the Metrical Psalms of Francis Rous by the devout Scot of the older school. Of all recent writings which have gained the popular ear and heart, the one likeliest *The Noble Lesson* is that simple but touching poem which is known as *The Old, Old Story*. Like that, *The Noble Lesson* is in verse, for the easier committing of it to the memory. It is written in a singular *patois* of Italian : doubtless it was easily and widely understood. It divides mankind into the two great classes, advancing to the two solemn ends. It enjoins to honour God the Father, to implore the aid of God the Son, to seek the illumination of the Blessed Spirit : these Three one God in Trinity. It rehearses the leading facts in Old Testament history : the Birth, Life, Miracles, Death and Resurrection of Christ. It states the differences between true and false pastors, and it sketches the character of all godly men. Briefly, these will not curse, swear, lie, nor behave impurely ; they will not kill nor be deceitful ; *and*

*they are called Waldenses.* One recalls, with a smile, the ancient *God has given the earth to the Saints : We are the Saints.* *The Noble Lesson* draws to a close with the daring statement that God only can forgive sins ; and that no mortal can do so, be he Priest or Bishop, Cardinal or Pope. And it ends by a statement of the Last Judgment. The step was final, and fatal, of traversing the claim on which all Roman influence founded, of power to forgive and retain sins. For though, in some sort of half-hearted way, many who have parted from Rome set up that strange claim, it has never been truly acted out except by that great Imposture. And one does not, in these regions, know any mortal of intelligence to go about, who pretends to believe it now. One reads Keble's verses, which tell how a mortal youth drew near God's altar : how authorised hands were laid on his head ; and how, when he rose from his knees, ' he could bind or untie the dread celestial bands : ' one reads the verses now, and sadly smiles, but says nothing. We have learnt that lesson, at least, which was boldly taught, by men who took their lives in their hands, seven hundred years since in *The Noble Lesson.*

We read, with some interest, the divers comments of good men on this remarkable Poem. One, in his vehemence, standing upon his defence, says (you shall have his own words), ' Now I defy the impudence of the devil himself to find therein the least shadow of Manichæism.' Such is the phraseology of religious controversy : and it has not much changed yet. It comes with more weight, when we find that chiefest and most massive of English Church-his-

torians, the late Dean Milman of St. Paul's, writing such words as these :<sup>1</sup>

'*The Noble Lesson* is a remarkable work, with its calm, almost unimpassioned simplicity : It is a brief, spirited statement of the Biblical history of man, with nothing of fanatic exaggeration, nothing even of rude vehemence : it is the perfect, clear, morality of the Gospel. The close, which arraigns the clergy, has nothing of angry violence : it calmly expostulates against their persecutions, reproves the practice of death-bed absolutions, and the composition for a life of wickedness by a gift to the priest. Its strongest sentence is an emphatic assertion that the power of absolving from mortal sin is in neither cardinal, bishop, abbot, pope, but in God alone.'

It was this closing assertion which made it needful for Rome to look to the Waldenses : with the peculiar look which privileged human beings have always cast on those who would take their privileges away. The first thing was resolutely to confound these simple and virtuous mountaineers with other separatists, whose views were subversive of Scripture and of morality, and whose lives accorded with their views. No doubt the clear scriptural teaching of *The Noble Lesson* went against the grain of the complicated, legendary, mythic, and marvellously *developed* religion of the Latin Church of the twelfth century. But it was the absolute denial of priestly or papal absolution, which meant casting away the scabbard for a struggle in which one must fall. It needs little imagination to picture forth great hierarchs, some devoutly believing in their system, some cynically rejecting it in their heart, but

<sup>1</sup> *History of Latin Christianity*, vol. iv. p. 185.

all alike in this, that they lived and fattened on the spoils it brought them, reading the closing lines of *The Noble Lesson* as an American slave-holder read an abolitionist manifesto, as a Turkish pasha reads a story of the actual working of his government in *The Times*, with the instant and most urgent reflection, Either this must be stopped, or we shall go down.

And now that the keen eye of Rome was turned on this daring race of men, what did it see?

Four or five narrow valleys, of infinitesimally small extent in comparison with the vast Roman world: these running into remote Alpine recesses. We do not know their population with any accuracy; but it must have been small. There was not a considerable town. The people were herdmen, and tillers of the soil. Yet, thus few in number, they were not the less formidable for opposition through that; nor did the moderate extent of their country make sure that it should take up little space in the history of mankind. Ancient Greece was about as big as the two counties which make Galloway. Certain of the famous Seven Churches of Asia were probably something of the size of a little congregation in these days, with two or three hundred communicants. Have you any idea of what was the population of Scotland at the time of Bannockburn? Yet St. Andrews Cathedral was standing in glory then; one of many such. And at the Union in 1707, the population of Scotland, all told, was one million: something like one quarter of the present population of London.

These valleys stretched along the banks of three rivers, the best known of which is the Po. The

territory in ancient days belonged to the Taurini, whose capital city of Taurinium survives in Turin. In the valley of the Po there were but few Waldenses, but the next northward is well known in the history of their Church. It is the Valley of Lucerna, twenty miles in length, and yielding corn, wine and chestnuts ; out of it runs the deep and barely accessible vale of Angrogna. Further north is the valley of Perosa, fifteen miles long, lying along the river Cluson. Ascending that river, high among the Alps, is the valley of Pragela. And at the upper end of the valley of Pragela is the valley of San Martino, the most inaccessible of all. For the only entrance into it is by a chasm, whose entire breadth is filled up by the river Germanasco.

Such was the scene. And no doubt, looking at it, one thinks how greatly men's religious belief is affected by the region in which they live. Ah, the pathos of the word *Pagan* ! The town-folk, reached by the first preachers, turned Christian ; the neglected village-folk remained heathen. And the difference is immense, minimise it as you will. The priests in those valleys were few, and not sharply looked after ; no doubt most of them were there because they could not get occupation anywhere else. It is the statement of their enemies that if they did but draw their tithes, the people (for them) might worship where they would. This is not quite human nature. Yet the priesthood may have been lazy ; and certainly must have lost heart. For these men of the Valleys early arrived at the idea, so unhappily familiar here, of splitting off wholly from a National Church they thought wrong, instead of staying and trying to make it better.



Very strong in them was what we may call the *Seceder spirit*. Nor was there wholly absent what is represented in these days by the sturdy religionist, holding one man to be even better than another, who because his parish minister has failed with sufficient frequency to call on his healthy wife, announces that he has left off coming to church for the future. In such cases one has remarked that it is the place which very rarely knew him which is now to know him no more.

Somehow, gradually, either following some forgotten leader, or a spirit strangely spreading through masses all at once, the Waldensians had parted company with the dominant Church; and there grew up among them a church-organisation of their own. They had their congregations: their sacraments: their prayers and preaching in the vulgar tongue. For a while they copied (as is human) the system they had abandoned, and had their three orders of clergy, Bishops, Priests, and Deacons. We are diligently assured that there was nothing of lordly Prelacy: the Bishops were humble and poor; little more than perpetual moderators, whose function it was to stimulate their brethren's zeal. Even this modified Episcopacy ceased. By 1160, if it may be believed, the earliest Presbyterian church (after the Apostolic day) was there; the only survival of the hierarchy being one who was for life moderator of their synods. And they called their ministers *Barbes*: the word Barbe, which means *Uncle*, being preferred to the *Father* of the Roman way. Reading the documents of the Waldensian Church, which though probably not so ancient as zealous Waldensians would make

them, are assuredly very old, nothing would be easier than to ridicule that homely people. Their views were, in divers matters of morality, what we should now call narrow : but then they were held by austere folk who lived six hundred years ago. I suppose a good many in Scotland and in England, able to look back even fifty years, can remember severe rules about the observance of the Lord's Day, and about various forms of amusement which are now freely turned to for a little healthful distraction from common care : I can remember good people who thought it sinful to read a work of fiction. I well remember being told that the Second Commandment forbids not merely the bowing down to a graven image, but the making of any statuary at all.

There is a document called *The Ancient Discipline of the Evangelical Churches of the Valleys of Piedmont*, in which Article IX. treats of *Dancings or Balls*. It begins :

'A Ball is the Devil's Procession, and whosoever entereth into a dance, entereth into his procession. The Devil is the leader, the middle, and the end of the dance. So many paces as a man maketh in a Ball, so many leaps he maketh towards Hell.'

You smile at that last statement. But pray remember it is taken word for word from so venerated an authority as St. Augustine. And remember too, that in 1533, so mild a man as Melancthon wrote to certain Waldensian pastors : 'In reality I do not at all disapprove of that very severe manner of exercising the discipline which is practised in your churches. Would God it were enforced with a little more rigour in ours!' Consider too, how in the introductory

address in the Communion Service of the Anglican Church, a longing glance is cast back on the Lenten penance which can no longer be enforced : and it is stated that 'until the said discipline may be restored again, which is much to be wished,' certain minatory declarations will now be cast into the air, to be appropriated by such of the congregation as feel in themselves that these declarations concern them. Many of you, too, have doubtless read that extraordinary portion of Mr. Buckle's *History of Civilisation* which gives a view of the ecclesiastical tyranny which dominated Scotland in a not very distant day now gone by for ever, God be thanked. Calling to remembrance the bigotries, the narrownesses, the absurdities, of truly Christian men, who lived much earlier than we in the development of the race, it is well to consider what may be thought of some of our ways as to Church life and organisation five hundred years hereafter ; and to maintain a humble and charitable silence.

And now, looking at the Waldensian Church thus equipped : parted from Rome as far as it could part : holding substantially Protestant doctrine, save that for a time there survived a materialistic view of our Lord's Presence in the Communion which came very near to Transubstantiation, and which certainly would not meet approval in the Reformed Church generally : desiring nothing more than to be let alone by Rome to lead a strict and holy life and maintain a simple worship in which plain folk could join with understanding and heart together : we are brought face to face with the extraordinary and lamentable fact of Religious Persecution.

Why not let these plain and conscientious folk

alone? They desired to meddle with nobody: why should anybody meddle with them? Say it was an odd taste to prefer so very simple a worship. But they did prefer it, and found it helpful. And it is a very serious thing to require man or woman to attend a service in church which that man or woman hates. Say it was strange that they should choose to support (however humbly) their plain preachers: while tithe must be paid to the Roman priest, whether they accepted his ministrations or no. But it was for themselves to say whether they got their money's worth. And they thought they did. Ah, it is very lately men have come to reason so! It was an incalculable step in human progress, where a man was found to say to disputatious brethren, 'Let us agree as far as we can; and where we cannot agree, in God's name let us agree to differ.' But these great steps in advance are taken by individual souls, very long indeed before they are taken by the race, or even by surrounding mortals. What step in intellectual or moral development dare you say has indeed been taken by the entire Human Race?

The instinct of Religious Persecution is in our nature. And that is a narrow statement of the fact. The instinct of Persecution is in us, as towards all who in any matter think or act differently from ourselves. The persecution is modified according to the time and place. But whoever resolutely refuses to conform to the ways of those amongst whom he lives will suffer what is in fact persecution. Strange individualities in dress, in manners, will be visited. Dickens tells us he found it out when he began to wear a beard, which was an unknown thing then; and

Carlyle, when he thought to walk about London streets dressed as at Craigenputtock. The good old minister, gone now to Heaven (for which he was much fitter than for this earth), who solemnly *cut* a brother who voted against him in the Presbytery; and who wrote to a once very-dear friend that communion between them must cease, for that the once very-dear friend had said he approved of the organ, was a persecutor, so far as possible. And quite lately, I read a curious little book, written within the last ten years, which indicates a rancour, a malignity, against those men who have thought to improve our national worship, so truly terrible, that I should not have trusted its author with the torch which could have lighted up the fagots about good Dr. Robert Lee.

The instinct of persecution is in us, towards those who differ from us in matters as to which our likes and dislikes are strong. Not merely where money loss, or loss of worldly influence, is involved,—as with American or West Indian slavery (few know now how Wilberforce was spoken of when he proposed to touch that last): where men think differently from us on points which involve no material good or ill to any mortal. One has known the fact that a man keenly liked or disliked a hymn, prove a cause of coolness towards another man whose like or dislike was the other way. One has known the expression of a preference for an evening service over an afternoon service cause a marked drawing-off. But when, in addition to this sentimental consideration, you live and thrive by the institution which is attacked: when the continuance of your food and raiment is touched by the question whether another man's opinion shall

prevail, and find general acceptance: when the question whether you shall be a great Prince, enjoying a vast revenue, ruling men's souls, holding your own against kings, depends on its being generally believed that you and those you rule have power to forgive sins,—have power to open Heaven to the dying,—then fire and sword (if you can send them, and if you are an average human being) will be the portion of those who would teach mankind that you have no such power, and never had it, and never could have it,—that, in fact, in the greatest matters which concern our life here and wheresoever else, you are a vile Impostor!

And that was exactly what the Waldenses said to the Church of Rome. No wonder the Roman Church would not let them go quietly and think as they liked.

I do not know how far the men who ruled the Roman Church were honest. I believe there were some among them who truly thought that the teaching of these Waldensian preachers was ruining souls. And I can respect an honest Inquisitor. I have known one or two good men who would have been very honest and very cruel Inquisitors. But I know that many who let slip the dogs of persecution, who unmercifully employed the rack and the flames, had no faith at all in the system they stood up for. They knew perfectly that it was a monstrous imposition. Such a being as Bethune, Cardinal-Archbishop of St. Andrews, was a mere dishonest murderer, living on the continuance of a bad system in which he had not the smallest belief; but ready, when the system which made him rich and great was

threatened, to imprison or burn a heretic, as promptly as a West Indian slave-holder vilified Clarkson or Zachary Macaulay. I remember, I never will forget, one who said to me, when I was a youth : 'I don't believe a word you preach. But go on : I don't want Christianity to be abolished : It is an excellent thing for keeping the lower classes contented.' And no doubt it is all that, at least. A good many people, both rich and poor, would break down, beaten, if it were not for the consolations of religion. But, thinking meanwhile of the Roman Church, and of those in its high places who lighted the flames of persecution,—who, age after age, with an appalling cruelty, used the tortures of the Inquisition—I could tell you of some that the Devil might be ashamed of,—let me say to you, Look at these men, and see them for what they were : these graceless princes of the Church, who, lapped in luxury, half-ignorantly and quite heartlessly, set sharp racks at work, to make an end of the brave truth-tellers whose words would have made an end of them. See them for what they were. Get rid of the glamour of the great cathedrals : *they* did not build them : plain, toiling men did that. Put away the thought of the pure saint here and there, men and women a very little lower than the angels : these saintly souls hated the foul abuses of the system as much as we do : but they were cowed, they were gagged,—they turned sadly to the making of their own devout souls. Put away the thought of glorious music, shaking those stately vaults : that was no essential part of Popery : we may have the long-drawn aisles and the glorious praise, and Christ's pure gospel along with them. And see the system and the men

in their own deformity : a system of vile imposture kept up to allow a race of foul-living, cynical unbelievers to fatten on the fears and the deepest needs of poor humanity. *That* was the undisguised Rome of the middle ages ; and though there were pure souls in it who had been sophisticated into accepting the vital dogma which was the foundation of all its power ; these pure souls would have been the first to confess and bewail the unutterable badness of the *personnel* and the working. There were grand and touching accessories of the Roman Church : every one must feel it. But the Borgian Pope and the profligate cardinal and the infidel abbé shall not hide behind St. Francis and St. Agnes and St. Bernard : no, nor behind simple kindly parish priests, and unknown monks devoutly copying the Gospels.

Coming to the actual history of the persecutions of the Waldensian Church, we find, at the first, an absence of any clear account of the methods of persecution employed : and afterwards a depressing sameness in the story. Such general statements as that of Kurtz, that 'thousands were brought to the stake,' make one wish for much fuller information. It appears certain that Pope Innocent III., a sagacious Pontiff, discerned the impolicy of driving so much zeal out of the Church if by any means it could be kept within the Church : and he opened negotiations with the Poor Men of Lyons, proposing to transform them into a fraternity of monks, to be called the *Pauperes Catholici*, empowered to preach, and to hold religious meetings. But the tide had been missed : the Waldenses had come to see the unscriptural character of the Roman Church, and a concession



which would have been thankfully received thirty years before, was now rejected. It was this same Innocent III. who instituted the Inquisition : and the Waldenses were the earliest objects of its cruelty. By the year 1228, when the Inquisition had been established only twenty-two years, certain French Bishops begged the monks who directed it to stay their hands, till the Pope should be informed how great were the numbers imprisoned by it : numbers so great that it was impossible to bear the cost of their support, or even to find stone and mortar to build prisons to hold them.

The manner of the heretic's death, always remember, was almost invariably Burning Alive. And the fires which scorched and agonised some of the more outstanding among the Waldensian martyrs, did not send up their smoke (how awful to look at from afar) against the snowy hills. For Waldo had made disciples in divers countries, finally dying in Bohemia in 1179 : and the Inquisition burnt his disciples where they found them. Two women are particularised at Rheims : one nameless girl who 'uttered neither groan or complaint, nor shed a tear ; but constantly and cheerfully, like a martyr of Christ, endured every torment of the burning flame.' Strange to say, sometimes the local priests got on quite well with the Waldenses : priest and barbe, we are told, sometimes living like brothers : the persecution was directed from afar. You must be a very savage creature, if you could really wish that some poor woman, living next door to you in a little village, should be tortured to death ; even if she were a very keen sectary. But there was no relenting in those

whose special charge was the punishment of the heretics. One Borelli, an Inquisitor, in a zealous mission lasting over thirteen years, burnt very many ; to us, thereby infamous for ever : to his friends, doubtless, a man doing a trying but precious work for Christ. In the thirteenth century, Pope Gregory IX. urged a specially bitter persecution. We have the general assurance ; but are not touched as we should be did we know of individual cases. But the Waldenses were banished from all the Italian cities, and their houses pulled down. The Emperor Frederick, at Padua, 1239, issued three edicts against them. But, being a layman, he retained some human feeling : and he expostulated with the deluded people for their folly in courting martyrdom, when they had but to be reconciled to Rome and live in peace. At Christmas 1400, a raid was made by some volunteer persecutors on the valley of Pragela, and many mothers and children perished in the snow. Through all these things, the persecutors declared that they were not merely inflicting due punishment on separatists from the Church, but on perpetrators of unknown crimes : the lie came with the blow. In the fourteenth century, Wycliffe and Walter Lollard, away in England, taught doctrines essentially Waldensian ; we all know to what result.

The fifteenth century had reached its middle year : and though the Waldenses elsewhere still suffered that persecution which was their normal state of life, the inhabitants of the Valleys had respite. Their harmless behaviour had its effect, and mothers who sought nurses for their children were eager to engage the modest and faithful women from these remote

places. The Duke of Savoy also wisely refused to engage in any systematic persecution. Yet still there was an occasional martyrdom ; now accompanied by horrors of torture which are beyond description. Only it may be said that they were even such as the English government inflicted on divers Jacobite rebels in the year 1746, later by three hundred years. It is not expedient to throw stones here.

Larger measures were adopted in 1488. An army of 18,000 men, who, though generally the offscourings of the earth, were recognised by Rome as *crusaders*, soldiers of the Cross, was let loose upon the valleys, and over-ran them. You can picture the horror of the time in many a quiet cottage home : though here and there the vallevmen withstood them, in which case they naturally ran away. Women and children suited them better. Philip VII., Duke of Savoy, had been assured that the children of the Waldensian race were not human in appearance. One can well picture, from modern experience, the kind of people that told him so. The same kind exactly as those who used to declare that Dr. Robert Lee was a Socinian, and that Principal Caird taught his divinity students that sin is quite right. But the Duke sent for some children, and declared he had never seen prettier children in his life. Even so did those who actually listened to Principal Caird's lectures find that in fact he taught that sin is quite wrong.

Yet again, in 1532, there is the same dreary story of the region violated by a merciless soldiery. How could the Waldensians live ?

In the sixteenth century, the little Church opened a correspondence with Erasmus. Two of the brethren

were sent to Antwerp to talk with him. But Erasmus was far too politic and indifferent for these simple men, with whom God's truth was life or death. He was politeness itself. He had not time to read their lengthy papers through, but saw no harm in what he read. But he said that his testimony in their favour would injure him and could do no good to them: and that he really had not courage to recommend men who were 'hated by all.' Such was his description of them. Even the courageous Luther at first spoke of them in depreciatory fashion, calling them 'rustics;' and demanded of them a clearer statement of what they really believed. Yet, by and by, Luther said to them, 'Ye appear to me nearer to the purity of the gospel than all others whom I have known.' He found fault with them for not permitting their pastors to marry. But they explained that this was simply because they did not think their pastors could afford to do so. It was merely a matter of economical expediency. In a little while they proceeded to admonish Luther for not bringing in such strict discipline as they enforced: a discipline remarkably near to that once enforced in the Church of Scotland. Luther received their rebuke with entire good nature. But, doubtless, the self-sufficiency which suggested it may explain the general unpopularity of the Valley Church. On Melancthon, too, they urged the burning question of discipline: but were gently put aside. The whole story sounds remarkably Scotch.

In 1546, after the Council of Trent, the great Emperor Charles v. opened a general war against Protestants, confiscating the estates of nobles who received the

new faith : a singular reversal of what in that behalf came about in Scotland. In 1557, Calvin thought the Reformed might hold together with the Waldenses, though the Waldenses (he said) got credit for being 'so morose.' Neither did he approve their views as to the Communion. A letter is recorded, entitled *The Waldenses to Calvin, the servant of God* : it is signed *The Elders of the Community of the Brethren commonly called Waldenses*. Calvin, in his reply, upbraids them for using too strong words about their opponents. One would say they must have been very strong indeed.

Once again, the Valleys were flooded with savage soldiers. Details are impossible here. It is enough to say that all the horrors of recent days in Bulgaria befouled those regions. At one place, forty women were locked into a barn filled with straw, and burnt. One soldier proposed to let some escape ; but his more resolute comrades cast them back into the flames. The Waldensians rose in armed resistance. Is there one here who will say they did not do right ? And there is no use in pretending that in such a case the savagery is all on one side. Brutal oppression will make mad wiser men than the poor folk of the Valleys. But now, they were declared formally to be rebels against their sovereign. Yet they were assured all should be well, if they would but attend mass. In the awful season which followed, some few apostatised. Who can wonder ?

In 1580, Charles Emanuel became Duke of Savoy, and the Valleys, which had repeatedly changed owners, were again included in his dominions. One can see that the Valleys were not much desired, even by those

most desirous of increased territory. Now, for a time, there was peace. The Duke met a deputation in Lucerna, and being assured of their loyalty, promised them liberty of religion. The Protestant princes of Germany had interceded with him for his subjects, and the Prince Elector Palatine, writing from Augsburg in 1566, set forth views as to religious toleration so wise and enlightened, that one may well wish they were heartily accepted by all Christian people now, after three hundred years. 'I entreat you to understand and consider,' says the Elector to the Duke, 'that the Christian religion may be persuaded, but not forced. It is a real truth, that religion is no other than a firm and settled persuasion of God, and of His will revealed in His word, and imprinted in the spirits of men by the Holy Spirit, which having taken root, cannot easily be loosened or plucked up by any torments or tortures, and such men will sooner endure the worst that can befall them, than receive or embrace anything which they apprehend to be contrary to religion and godliness.' But all this, and much more, availed little, or availed but for a little time. In 1597, the Duke of Savoy, not in any way understanding Waldensian scruples, wrote a letter to that people, entreating them to be reconciled to Rome. And in the course of the seventeenth century, this entreaty was enforced in a fashion which is not likely to be ever forgotten.

No doubt, there was always the pretext of treason, in that the Valley people rejected the religion of their Duke. And no doubt, too, accusations were brought against them of unspeakable and unnatural crimes.

The Duke of Savoy, first, commanded that the Waldenses should within fifteen days go to Mass, or else within two months leave their homes and country. The intention was plainly avowed, to 'utterly destroy this heretical region.' Yet the stroke was stayed. For a while, the region passed under the rule of France. And a terrible visitation of the plague having carried off one-third of the people, and all the pastors but two (there had been only fifteen), their places were supplied by pastors from France, whose discipline was milder. Among other things, they left off the fashion of sprinkling thrice in Baptism, and of breaking the wafer in the Communion (which they still used) into three pieces, in recognition of the Trinity. They also abolished the custom that the Moderator of the Church should once in each year visit each congregation, and inquire of the people how they liked their minister: a custom which could never have been popular with the ministers. The Valleys again became part of Savoy: and the Duke conceived the plan of entirely ejecting from them his troublesome subjects. In January 1655, the order came that the Waldenses should forthwith submit to Rome, or else go. And the inducement was held out, that if they would but conform to the dominant Church, they should be asked for no taxes for five years. The Protestant Cantons of Switzerland appealed to the Duke in vain. He replied that his subjects in the Valleys had transgressed his orders, and those of his predecessors, but that the remedy was mild: they had but to depart.

One recalls the prayer that the flight of such as must fly should not be in the winter: the edict came

on one of the first days of the bitter year of the Alps. But not till April 16, 1655, did the troops enter the region. They numbered 15,000. The Valley-men, as they could, rose in arms, and resisted. You turn away from the story of the unspeakable horrors of that time. There were instances of such treachery as that we link with Glencoe. The troops of Savoy fired every human dwelling, and murdered every human being, young and old. Saturday, April 24, is described, not unjustly, as 'one of the most infamous days for blood and carnage that ever the sun shone on.' It was not mere killing: it was torture. It was now that mother and child, bound together, were hurled down the rocks: you remember Milton's line: it is literally true. We cannot look at these things. That April and May of 1655 were times of true devilry, if one hundredth part of what history records be fact. There was all the horror of Turkish massacre and rapine. Yet hardly any apostatised.

The leaders of the Waldenses sent out a manifesto to Protestants all over Europe; which is there to be read. The Swiss moved; and England, under the strong hand of Cromwell. First, Cromwell offered to transport all the surviving Waldensians to Ireland, where he had recently been using the Romanists much as Savoy had used the Protestants. Who can justify any in that awful time? The Valley people clung to their Valleys. Then Cromwell ordered a Fast over all Britain, and that collections be made for the suffering people. He sent Sir Samuel Morland to talk to the Duke of Savoy; which he did with some effect. And Milton wrote a letter of appeal to the King of Sweden. It was now, too, he wrote those lines on



the Piedmontese massacres which men will not easily let die. Doubtless the Waldenses did cruel things, as well as suffered them. They slew the entire Irish garrison of San Secondo, many hundreds. It was in truth a civil war, carried on with varying success; and even their enemies said that the Valley-men were 'lions, and more than lions.' They were fighting for their children and their wives, as well as for their creed. Morland's address to the Duke is on record; it is manly, as became Cromwell's representative. And you may read the Duke's reply, that the whole thing was a mistake; that he had been cruelly maligned; that malicious men had reproached him for the fatherly chastisement of some rebellious subjects; that when Cromwell heard the facts, he would no longer sympathise with such rebels. The Duke, in short, under Cromwell's hand, lied and shuffled like a Grand Vizier under that of Stratford Canning. The King of Sweden, too, had his word to say; so had the Swiss their word. And in July an amnesty was declared; the Waldenses were promised freedom of worship, provided they suffered their Roman neighbours to repair their burnt churches, and worship in their own way. King Louis of France, who had countenanced the Duke, in much trepidation assured Cromwell that he had never intended a massacre, but something inconceivably gentler; which of course Cromwell would believe, or not.

The number of Waldensians who perished was 6000. The sum collected for them by Cromwell was £38,000. Part of this was sent, in different sums, to the Valleys. And £17,000 remained, the interest of which was to endow the Pastors.

This was not the last of the persecutions of this people. But a word must be said here, as to this story of hardly relieved darkness. I know you weary of the story of Waldensian persecution; and yet I cannot tell you how hard it has been to relate the story thus shortly. I have had to abridge with an excessive stringency. The story reminds one of some ever-recurring attack of most painful illness, which yet lasts long when it comes. You know the sinking of heart of the poor sufferer; and the sense that the sympathy of friends is exhausted. People weary of hearing that the poor soul is ill again. One has known suffering creatures conceal their awful pain; aware of this. I do not know, in human history, a more piteous chapter than those which tell of the reiterated and all but ceaseless persecutions of this poor mountain race. And I fear that most of us, so tried, would (under some mental reservation) have professed to believe anything.

And yet, when this sad season of persecution is over, the history of the Waldensian Church is told. The tragic interest is at an end. The little communion, so very little even side by side with the lesser Scotch sects, abides to this day; but it has passed from the region of heroic history to that of more or less interesting reports and missionary information. It has never grown self-supporting; and its story, when not that of chill and revival, and sometimes of regrettable internal dissension, has been that of foreign sympathy and support: of deputations sent to distant places to plead its cause: and of subscriptions quite impartially received from Churches which are in sorrowful opposition to one another;

likewise, God be thanked, of prosaic though useful Sunday services and pastoral work, whose story is sufficiently written in *Missionary Records*, and the quarterly reports of auxiliary associations. There is space only to name some points. Charles II. and his brother repudiated payment of the £17,000 remaining of Cromwell's collection: but William III. honestly recognised the debt. In 1768 George III. issued letters, asking well-disposed persons to subscribe for the support of the little communion, just thirteen pastors and churches, all told. In 1797 a deputation had an interview with Napoleon: a very business-like conversation. By 1833 the number of the pastors had increased to fifteen. The Church proper remains as little as ever; but it is attempting missionary operations in certain Italian cities. Some thousands of pounds have been raised in Britain within the last few years towards the further endowment of the Church. On the last Sunday of November 1883 a little place of worship was opened in Rome; and in May of most years a Waldensian pastor may be heard to address the General Assembly.



## ST. GILES' LECTURES.

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*FOURTH SERIES—THE CHURCHES OF CHRISTENDOM.*

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*LECTURE VII.*

### THE LUTHERAN CHURCH.

By the Rev. H. G. GRAHAM, Minister of the Parish of Nenthorn.

IT is the glory of one great painter to have fixed for all after-time the type of the features of Christ, which the world receives as if it were a true likeness of that face of which there remains no copy ; and as we gaze on the walls of the old refectory of the Dominican convent of Maria delle Grazie at Milan, we see that countenance of the Lord in the wonderful painting of the Lord's Supper—blurred, alas ! by time, neglect, and decay—but still looking out with that well-known form in its beauty, majesty, and grace. As it has been the part of Leonardo da Vinci to give a conception of the features of Jesus, which will for ever be associated with him, which after-art must follow, which all Christendom must reverence, so has it been given to several master spirits of the Church to fix for their age and race the

features of Christ's character and teaching. Teachers like St. Augustine, St. Francis, Calvin, Luther, have given to the world their views of Christianity which were accepted by their followers as perfect copies of the divine original, but in which, unfortunately, we do not always recognise the mild and great benignity of the Lord, for his grace is sometimes as much obliterated as the once lovely lineaments on the mildewed walls of the Milanese Convent. It is the impression of Christianity which Luther with his fellow-Reformers gave the German people which we have to consider to-day—an impression given by a masterly spiritual genius, which, faulty and rude at the first, is difficult to trace after three centuries of debate, of change, and of denial in the Church he founded. At the same time, when we speak of the 'Lutheran Church,' we must remember that it was no wish of the great Reformer that such should be its title, or that any body of believers should be identified with his name. 'I pray you,' he wrote in the spirit of that apostle whose thoughts were the motive of his life, 'leave my name alone, and do not call yourselves Lutherans, but Christians. Who is Luther? I have not been crucified for any one. Cease, my dear friends, to cling to these party names and distinctions, and let us call ourselves Christians after Him from whom our doctrine comes.'

Not the less, however, has his name been connected with that phase of Protestantism which was settled in Germany, in Sweden, Denmark, and Norway, which was crushed in Austria and Bohemia, and which exists amongst German emigrants in America—for everywhere it was founded by his efforts,

inspired by his genius, and defended by his memory. It is necessarily to Germany that we must chiefly confine our attention, and indeed only to a part of that country, for it is generally forgotten that while people speak of Protestant Germany, a third of its population still are as Roman Catholic as they were 300 years ago, and it shows how much religious belief is a matter of accident and of geography when we observe that districts which remained Papist throughout the Reformation, under the control of their princes, continue so to the present day, while Austria has been forced back to the old worship. This fact must somewhat temper the ardent terms which are often used in speaking of the triumph of evangelical principles, and that habit of looking on the German people as having a peculiar genius for Protestantism.

To understand the story of the Lutheran Church, we may glance at the incongruous social influences which led to the reception of Reformation views. Long before Luther spoke in Germany, there were signs of intense discontent with mediæval papacy. There were mystics, weary of barren dogmatism of schools and fossil ceremonies of the Church, who sought a spiritual and hidden union with God and Christ; there were men full of intellectual life, inspired by the Humanism which had come across the Alps, who were impatient for mental emancipation from ecclesiastical tyranny, and held that when dogmas are dead, it is wholesome to bury them; there were men of the world in cities who laughed at the ignorant monks, scorned an immoral priesthood, and hated a cunning priestcraft; there were princes jealous of the encroachments of the Church,

and covetous of its enormous endowments ; nobles angry at its heavy demands upon their rents, as well as heavy demands on their credulity ; and above all, hundreds of thousands of peasants, who had learned for ages to associate the papacy with rapacity, which seized their little earnings for every mass it said, indulgence it gave, and rite it performed, while, as tithes, it took the best sheaves of corn from their little fields, the fattest cattle from their stalls. The spiritual shepherd, instead of sheltering his flock, had fleeced them, and left Providence to temper as it might the wind to the many shorn lambs. Add to these the devout and spiritual natures scattered through the land, who longed for a purer faith in a God who regarded inward penitence and not formal penance, and who could pardon humanity without medium of priest or intercession by saint ; without indulgence from Pope, or sacrifice of mass ; and we have the material ready to receive the Reformation doctrine. But if the nation had not had worldly aims to be gained by revolt from the papacy, it is to be feared that the Reformers would have preached in vain. When in 1517 Luther protested against that iniquitous sale of indulgences for the sins of men, he gained sympathy from a people rendered indignant by priestly falsehood and exactions, who cheered on, with not quite disinterested applause, this brave monk who denounced his order, while all spiritual natures were quickened by his teaching that man was justified by faith in Jesus Christ, and in God's word could find all saving truth.

Luther, when he nailed his ninety-five theses on the Church at Wittenberg, thought, as a faithful

son of the Church, he was doing the Pope service by exposing an imposture which his Holiness must abhor. His eyes were opened when the bull was received from the Pope arrogating to himself the power of Vicar of Christ, and in virtue thereof his right of disposing of the stock of the merits of Christ and his saints, and to dispense whom he pleased from the pains of purgatory till the judgment day. Luther, astounded, appealed from the Pope to a future general council, and when in December 1520, amidst the cheers of the crowd, he burned the papal bull excommunicating him, his separation from his old order was completed, and from that day the Lutheran Church may date its origin. Having made the famous defence of his position before the Diet of Worms in 1521, his fame and influence became enormous, and grew while in his refuge in the castle of Wartburg he penned his stirring appeals to his countrymen, and wrote his grand translation of the New Testament which was to stir the hearts of the whole people, and amidst all social theological conflict to keep religion alive. In his absence, while his writings were speaking for him, and his doctrines spread, reckless spirits like Carlstadt were maiming his work, denying the worth of worship, of sacraments, and good works, while half-crazy fanatics were exciting every enthusiastic folly, which none could stay. The country needed the sound sense and powerful spirit of Luther to bring order out of chaos, and returning to Wittenberg he quickly dissociated the Reformation from its fanatical misleaders. Yet in 1525 there began that Peasants' war, when men, incited by false hopes from the new religion, and urged on by social



misery, rose in vain insurrection against the nobles and princes, and damaged the fair prospects of peaceful Reformation as they sought, not as Reformers hoped, the glorious liberty of the sons of God, but the vulgar liberty of the sons of men. This moved Luther, ever zealous for order, to hound the princes on to their ruthless bloodshed ; and the peasants found that this miner's son, their brother peasant, exercised all influence for their oppression. Meantime Protestantism was spreading in Germany, as it was growing under Zwingli in Switzerland, and in State after State the old faith was abolished, the priests were banished, the new doctrines were established ; though the new pastors were, according to Luther, often utterly ignorant and worthless, unable even to repeat the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, or the Commandments. Unfortunately those disputes between the reformed views of Zwingli and those of Luther now began to distract the religious world. The radical principles of the Swiss, which were spreading in Swabia and Upper Germany, got no sympathy or tolerance from the conservative German, and the conciliatory policy of Melanchthon failed to unite them, especially on the doctrine of the Lord's Supper, which was destined to be the subject of wretched discord for centuries in Germany.

At the Diet of Augsburg in 1530 was presented by the Protestant princes and citizens to the emperor that Confession which Melanchthon had framed as the defence and exposition of the new faith, but this was only met by imperial demand that the States should submit to the see of Rome within six months. Then the Schmalkaldic League of Protestant States

was formed for mutual defence ; and civil war, though warded off so long as Luther lived, broke out at his death in 1546. The emperor and Catholic princes, by aid of Spanish forces, tried to reduce the Protestants of the Schmalkaldic League to submission ; the leaders of the Lutheran party, the Elector of Saxony, and the Landgrave of Hesse were imprisoned ; and the whole country seemed about to become a Spanish province. At last the changes of political intrigue and emergency brought about a favourable peace, and by the Treaty of Augsburg in 1555, the Lutherans and Catholics were allowed equal rights,—‘neither was to molest the other,’—though all other Protestants, such as the Reformed Church or Calvinists who had not adhered to the Augsburg Confession, were refused toleration, and might be banished from each territory. Whatever religion a sovereign might choose to introduce, the subjects must henceforth submit. This then was the end of the Reformation—a reform of creed and church polity, but not of morals or religion—a reform which denied one Pope to set up a hundred little popes in his stead ; which freed the German people from the consistent rule of Rome, only to make them depend on the caprice or will of each prince and princelet whose mind was as narrow as his little territory.

Here let us turn from the external history of the Lutheran community to its internal arrangements—to that order of worship, creed, and government which Luther left as a legacy to future generations. While the Reformed Church had changed radically the belief and service of the Church, Luther retained much of that old faith and ritual, hallowed by

centuries of devotion and awe, which had left an impression on his mind he could not throw off, and which still exercised a powerful spell over his imagination. While the Calvinists abolished every vestment of the priest, tore down every image of the saints and every crucifix from the altar, he permitted all these relics of old time to remain, from his deeper sympathy for symbolism and his strong poetic nature. 'You have,' he said to his followers in Königsberg, 'to organise a new church. I beseech you, in the name of Christ, alter as few things as possible. You must not let the ceremonies of the new church differ much from the ancient rites. If mass in Latin be not done away with, retain it; if it is done away, retain the ancient ceremonial and ritual.' He did not feel that transcendent importance of outward forms so attractive to smaller natures, simply because he felt that the spiritual facts will endure whether or not there be symbols to express them to the eye. With humorous tolerance, therefore, he bore with all harmless scruples, and to busy complaints that a certain worthy pastor still wore the cope or cassock, he replied, 'Why, let him have three cassocks if they are any comfort to him,' for he well knew that opposition alone can turn a crotchet into a martyrdom. The Liturgy which Luther formed, and first used in 1525, when the Lord's Supper was first celebrated in the German tongue, was a mere modification of the Roman service, and much of the old ritual was retained. But this he did not seek to make binding on the Church at large; and he wrote when issuing his Order of Divine Service or 'German Mass,' 'I beseech you all who desire to use this, on no account to make it compulsory law,

but to use it according to Christian liberty, when, where, and as long as circumstances favour or demand it.' This liturgy, though widely received, was modified or changed in different States, and other forms, now long extinct, took its place. When therefore the new service was held, the people saw little to shock their old associations. They met in the old church, whose painted windows, still filled with quaint familiar figures of saint, apostle, or virgin, cast their deep hues on the images on the wall, on the altar with its crucifix and candles, on the minister in accustomed vestments, who administered the eucharistic bread in wafer to the kneeling communicants ; the old responses were repeated, the Sanctus was heard as of yore, though it was now sung in German to the fine music of Luther, and the great festivals of the Church were retained. What then was altered to the eye ? The liturgy was in the common tongue, the communion was in both elements ; hymns full of warmth of devotion in their own language were sung, set to expressive music which soon charmed them ; in the pulpit was the pastor, who taught with sincere but injudicious urgency the Protestant dogmas, instead of those illiterate priests, who gave their silly stories, imitated the sounds of birds and beasts, and made 'Easter laughter' for the rustic congregation. As the people had been unaccustomed to congregational singing, it was some time before Luther at his parish church of Wittenberg got them to join in praise, but soon the whole country seemed set to music, and sung themselves into Protestantism. They sang the hymns Luther had adapted from the rich Catholic vernacular collections, they joined in the grand chorales

and stirring tunes which the Reformer adopted from the stores of the old Church, or had composed himself, and the people by fireside, in workshop, at festivals, showed their love for these songs, which soon gained for the Lutheran body the name of 'the singing church.'

The creed of the Church was embodied in the Catechisms of Luther, the Augsburg Confession, with its tedious Apology, and Luther's Schmalkaldic articles. Yet we must remember that none of these had been intended as symbolical books for the Church, but had been written chiefly for polemical emergencies; the great Confession of Augsburg in fact was a profession of faith of Protestant princes and cities, not of a church. These books were used, however, as the authoritative confession of faith, though each German State in time had its own bulky formulas, which were extended as new heresies rose to bind the ministers and officials to orthodoxy. Re-asserting the great dogmas of common orthodox Christianity, the Lutheran creeds taught foremost the great doctrine of justification by faith in Christ, so as to deny the notion that any merit attaches to good works, though it represents that works are the fruit of faith; they taught the doctrine of original sin with the fulness of St. Augustine, that owing to Adam's fall man is utterly corrupt, given over to eternal death till regenerated by baptism and the Holy Spirit; they taught that man has no power of himself to do anything that is righteous in God's sight. Such doctrines gained further emphasis in the Formula of Concord. It is significant to note, in relation to present practice, what is the conception of the Sunday in the Augsburg

Confession ; it regards it as not a renewal of the Jewish Sabbath, but as a voluntary though useful human institution in the interests of good order. On the Lord's Supper the Lutheran creed accords more with the Roman Catholic than the Reformed Church. While the latter regarded it as a memorial feast—with a spiritual presence and communion with Christ—Luther maintained that, in the elements, though they were not substantially changed, the real body and blood of Christ were also substantially present, and crushed by the teeth of the receiver. How this doctrine, known as 'consubstantiation,' differs scientifically from the old 'transubstantiation' must be left for scholastic subtlety ; while the question which is the more rational theory, may be quietly left unsettled. It is not after all necessary to decide as to relative accuracy of rival theories whether two and two make five, or two and two make six. The Lutheran Creed also differed from the Reformed in holding baptismal regeneration and the ordinary necessity of baptism for salvation. As to the clerical order, Luther held the priesthood of all believers, who have therefore equal spiritual right to the clerical office, and that it is merely for the sake of order that some are chosen as ministers to teach the Gospel and administer the Sacraments. This abolition of episcopal order made him rely dangerously on the interposition of the princes to exercise authority. He looked to them to suppress heresy and disorder, and promote the faith, but he forgot that the power he had invoked to further truth and liberty could also be used to crush them. 'I see in the future,' said Melancthon sagaciously, 'a tyranny more intolerable than ever existed before ;' but not even he could foresee all

the evils in store for his Church, which was dependent on the whim of a prince, or the change of a ruler, as in the Rhenish Palatinate, which underwent ten changes of creed, Catholic, Lutheran, Calvinist, in one century, leaving to the bewildered peasantry very little faith behind. To account for the possibility of such cases of stolid submission of the people to arbitrary power, we must bear in mind the feudal condition of German society, the servility of nobles to the courts, the serfdom of peasantry to the nobles. We cannot expect much religious independence from peasants who dared not even leave the village for a night without permission from the bailiff of the baron; who dared not fire a gun to kill the wolf prowling round their door, or chase away the wild boars that wasted their scanty crops. To Luther Germany owes inestimable benefits—depth of religious feeling, breadth of Christian spirit, and liberty of the national conscience. But it must be said that he unintentionally promoted emancipation from political and intellectual restraints in society, rather than freedom from religious bondage in the Church. And though it was impossible to have a united Protestant church in a land broken up in innumerable petty States, where each prince exercised his sovereign power, and every noble his feudal rights over the subjects, by his unconciliatory course regarding the sacramentarian controversy Luther divided the evangelical community into hostile camps, which evilly affected the political history and the religious condition of Europe, and encouraged his successors to turn the splendid fight of faith he waged into a hateful and ceaseless fight of faiths.

When Luther died three-fourths of Germany were

Protestant, and in Sweden, Norway, and Denmark his creed and principles were adopted, though there the Churches, which retained episcopal orders, were in that absolute dependence on the sovereigns which was the fatal characteristic of all the Lutherans. As by the treaty of Augsburg the political struggle of Protestants ceased, we might expect that now peace would abound, and society be knit together by a fair charity and wider tolerance. Unfortunately this was not so, and the close of the wars of the princes was the beginning of the wars of the theologians. Henceforth for 200 years the German soil is a battle-field of dogmas, and the scene of religious controversy which elsewhere in modern Christendom is without a parallel; in the whole of Church history almost without an equal. Luther was scarcely dead, and his wise broad teaching silent, when Lutheran theologians became divided on points of doctrine, and stirred every town by their pronounced opinions on questions of which the laity could not even pronounce the names; and the greatest problems of humanity and divinity were forgotten in the ardent expression or repression of opinions on which were united the subtlety of the mediæval schoolman and the holy hatred of the modern zealot. Even during the great Reformer's lifetime these miserable disputes began. Agricola raised the Antinomian controversy, and the country was plunged into debate, whether the Law is binding on Christians or not; then the Adiaphoristic dispute raged fiercely between the followers of liberal-hearted Melancthon, and the austere followers of Luther as to what questions may be held indifferent and unessential to union and salvation; then the



Synergist controversy appears regarding the share of human liberty in conversion by Divine grace ; then the hot-tempered Flaccius stirs strife on the ultra-Lutheran dogma that man is composed of nothing but sin, and the Flaccian notion absorbs every mind, save such as have room to be agitated by Osiander's view that man is justified by Christ's divine nature, or to be horrified by Stancarus, who maintains man is justified by Christ's human nature—a heresy deemed so hopeless that in some States his adherents are denied the Lord's Supper, and decent burial. Thus the Church becomes a seething caldron of debate, with its bewildering elements of Flaccianism, Osianderism, Majorism, Synergism, Stancarianism. Nor was this conflict restricted to divines ; it was joined in by burghers and princes, who were not less zealous or more tolerant. Elector Augustus of Saxony banished all who shared the heresy of Flaccius, and then cast cannons with appropriate devices to celebrate the event. Strigel was imprisoned for three years for holding that man is not passive in the work of conversion. The Elector haled to hopeless imprisonment and terrible torture, jurists and physicians, whose sympathy with the Reformed Church gained them the name of Crypto-Calvinists, and when all such heretics were banished or killed, he in pious triumph had a medal struck to commemorate his victory, in which he is represented in armour holding a balance, in one scale being the infant Saviour, on the other the devil and four Calvinists. The result of such wretched controversy was to drive many moderate thinkers of the Melanchthon type into the ranks of the Reformed Church, to send others in dis-

gust back to the old faith, leaving the Lutheran body more narrow and intolerant than ever. No wonder the mild Melanchthon died in weariness repeating his frequent prayer : ' From the rage of the theologians deliver us, good Lord ! '

What the social consequences of all this were it is easy to imagine. Morality became worse, as orthodoxy increased. While the people were obliged to accept a faith they did not believe, at the Prince's order under pain of prison, and to hold doctrines they could not comprehend at the theologian's command, under pain of damnation, the elevating influence of religion could not be very great. The very hymns they sang were often dogmas like total depravity set to bad metre ; they were only told that heresy was devilish, and they concluded it was the greatest of all sins ; they were taught that man being saved by faith, works were not meritorious in the sight of God, and they naturally took the preachers at their word. Dissoluteness became prevalent in Protestant States, where in Catholic days it was hardly known. Luther had himself lamented the increasing immorality and mischievous conclusions drawn from evangelical doctrines, and there was far more cause for lamentation after he was dead, and the Church was left to the arbitrary rule of princes, as lax in life as they were rigid in creed, who, to show their zeal, sometimes fined every noble, and put in the stocks every peasant who did not go to sermon twice every Sabbath. Though these champions of faith delighted in surnames, and we read of John the Steadfast, Ernest the Pious, Augustus the Strong, we never read of one surnamed the Virtuous. Thus practical religion declined as keen dogmatism throve.

It was felt that some effort must be made, however, to settle this diversity of opinion in the Lutheran Church, and in 1580 a formula had been drawn up by eminent divines, which was to decide disputed questions. It decided many—far too many—in an intensely narrow spirit, and became generally recognised as authoritative in the country, although some states did not accept it, and when brought to Denmark, the king put it in the fire. Never was a title more ludicrously inappropriate than the Formula of Concord, for it speedily became the source of inveterate discord: ideas thrown out in the heat of discussion by Luther became now primary articles of faith; here the notion of Christ's bodily omnipresence became a fixed dogma: the points of division with the Calvinists were made sharper. Even yet such states as Saxony were not satisfied till they had safeguarded this body of doctrine by formulas more stringent and copious still. The strife was intensified against the Reformed Church; the press teemed with its quartos of printed animosity in querulous Latin; the worship of the sanctuary became a vehicle of controversy, and in 1592 we find the people singing in Church the invigorating hymn:—

‘Guard Thou thy saints with thy word, O Lord,  
And smite the Calvinists with thy sword.’

Lynx eyes were swift to see, and intolerance was quick to persecute any pastor who omitted to exorcise the devil before baptism; or reversed the first two words of the Lord's Prayer, and said like the Calvinists *Vater Unser* instead of *Unser Vater*. During all this exuberance of zeal, religion decayed, as if these divines, when exercising this favourite right of exor-

cism, had, instead of expelling the devil, exorcised by mistake the Spirit of God. The people were strict in religious observances, each burgher and peasant studied his Bible, and loved his hymn-book, and went with regularity to sermon. But the Church had banished the tyranny of the Pope, only to accept the tyranny of orthodoxy. They had gone from one extreme to the other, for as Luther had long before said, 'Humanity is like a drunken peasant, he no sooner gets up on one side of his horse than he falls over on the other.'

Such was the predominant if not universal state of the Church for generations ; but in 1618 a rude shock was given to every institution and to all society in Germany. The murderous Thirty Years' War broke out in a conflict fostered by fatal sectarian rivalry. Had the Lutheran princes joined hands with the Reformed, that war would have been stayed, but they preferred to unite with Catholic powers to helping Protestant brothers, while the Lutheran court preacher of John George of Saxony with his fatal influence fostered the alienation, and that terrible war began in which Sweden, France, and Germany, Spain and Austria were engaged. Before it commenced the people were happy, the towns were prosperous, the land was peaceful ; when it ended there was misery and desolation past description ; the country was devastated, the cultivated land in many districts had gone back to a state of nature, the people had lost that liberty, civilisation, and comfort which centuries had given them, and which two centuries did not give back. Roman Imperialists had pillaged and murdered the people in hundreds of thousands, and when Gustavus Adolphus was killed, and his army left

unrestrained, the Protestant Swedes were not less merciless; whole towns were destroyed and depopulated, Leipsic was burned five times, six times was Magdeburg sacked with horrors for which, as Schiller says, 'history has no speech and poetry no pencil;' neither sex nor age was spared in that ruthless violence; what the soldiers left the pestilence destroyed; peasants hid in the coffins of the dead and crept back at night to their roofless clay huts, daring not in winter's snow to light a fire, lest the smoke betray their existence. When the war was over in that ravaged land, out of seventeen millions of the population only five millions were left. Bravely in those dark days many of the clergy did their part by the sick and dying. Impoverished pastors had been often obliged to get support from the poor-box, or to work as their strength allowed at cutting wood and thrashing the oats in summer. The churches were closed, the bells were melted by the soldiers to make guns; but by the hill-side or amidst the forest, they would meet the houseless people, and the voices rose in the air singing to the solemn tramp of their music noble hymns of faith which often sustained the religious spirit of the country when it was nigh dead in the Church. Hymns were the delight and consolation of the peasantry; the same tunes were always associated with the words; and it had been the custom in many towns for city musicians at certain hours of the day to blow on their horns the sacred melodies. Thus were they made familiar and dear to all from childhood. In every pious house in the big cities, as among the charcoal-burners of the Thuringian forests, was read and re-read that once *famed* work of Arndt, the *True Christianity*, which,

when written before the war, was honoured by the love of the poor, and the hatred of the clergy, who denounced its evangelical lessons as pestilential. Translated into every European language it was read in the war by Catholic soldiers from Spain, Calvinists from Bohemia, and Lutherans from Sweden, and, worn next the breast, saved many a life from the enemy's bullet.

When peace was made at last in 1648 by the Treaty of Westphalia a most important decision on Protestantism was arrived at. The Reformed religionists were no longer to be persecuted, but to receive equal political rights with Catholics and Lutherans. This was a most decisive step in the tardy course of toleration, though unfortunately it did not affect Sweden, Norway, and Denmark, where no Calvinists were allowed to live, and only in 1860 did the king of Denmark recognise the legality of dissent at all. Theological controversy by this time had lost its old charm for the laity ; no longer in workshop and tavern and market did tradesmen and peasants discuss as of old those wonderful dogmatic niceties. What cared men after the thirty years' fight for life, whether Schwenkfeld was right or Weigelius was past redemption ? But not only was theological interest dead in the community, spiritual life was well-nigh dead too. For years the churches had been closed, the worship silenced, the children untaught, homes undisciplined ; a new generation reared in wild troublous times had grown to manhood almost without the restraint of civilisation, and society was rude and dissolute in city, country, castle, and university ; the preachers were few, incompetent and often licentious, and the Church, with the country, was demoralised.

Now began the age of dull and barren orthodoxy in Germany, when there was hardly a breath of spiritual life moving in the Church in general, though it was fresh and lovely in many a quiet parsonage and in many a simple home. There was the narrowest pedantry in universities, and vapid morality, or dull dialectics in the pulpit. It was taught that every accent in the Scriptures was inspired, that the Hebrew vowel-points were derived from Adam in Paradise; that to say the earth moved round the sun was to deny the Word of God. It was gravely urged that the creation took place in spring, because in the record of the creation in Genesis we read of grass, just as it has been maintained since by Russian priests that the world must have been made in autumn else there could have been no forbidden fruit; others disputed whether it occurred on the 25th of June or the 12th of July; to correct the Lutheran version of the Bible by a new reading was called 'Bible-murder,' and in 1638 the College at Wittenberg had declared it was blasphemy against the Holy Ghost to admit that there was any solecism or bad Greek in the Epistles. The chief sign of intellectual vigour was animosity against heresy, and in the latter half of the seventeenth century a catalogue of literature contains no less than 1590 catechetical sermons for children solely waged against the errors of Calvinism. Such orthodoxy was the only passport to heaven and a professorial chair, in days when Abraham Calovius, most laborious and influential of divines, used his morning and evening prayer: 'Fill me, O God, with hatred of the heretics!' In vain time after time the princes and magistrates issued edicts forbidding preachers to revile parties and persons by name; ministers re-

puddied such orders as messages from Satan, for was it not, they asked, a solemn duty to 'reprove' heretics by name, or as it was technically called, to exercise the *nominal elenchus*? Amidst such religious poverty a few men stand out brightly from those dark days, such as John Gerhard and the catholic-minded Calixtus, professor in Helmstadt, a man who had seen many countries, and had his mind opened to all opinions. His life-desire, as in the abortive conference at Thorn, was to make all Christians united in spirit if not in doctrine, to enable Calvinist, Catholic, and Lutheran to accord in brotherly sympathy. Of course the majority of the Church doubted at once if a man who had so much charity could possibly have any religion. They accused him and his friends of wishing vilely to mix the true with false religions; they condemned his policy as heresy under the name of Syncretism, and even denied to its adherents any claim to Christianity. Calixtus felt some natural satisfaction that even his opponents could quarrel amongst themselves, and that Wittenberg theologians in 1653 broke out in deadly strife in their pulpits; some asserting that one drop of Christ's blood would have redeemed the world, and others that the effusion of much blood was necessary. There is a vivid insight gained into the state of feeling in these curious times by reading the dying words of John Christian König, court-chaplain in 1664: 'My dear confessor, since I perceive that God is about to take me out of this world, I wish it understood that I remain unchanged and firm to the Augsburg Confession: I die the avowed enemy of all innovation and of syncretistic error,' and thus in the odour of sanctity passes away in peace this gentle disciple of orthodoxy. It is sad



to find, when the Elector of Brandenburg, with his accustomed autocracy, in 1662 enjoined all Lutherans to refrain from preaching against Calvinists, that Paul Gerhardt, the composer of some of Germany's finest and most spiritual hymns, preferred banishment to silence. Yet during this time of superfluous zeal scriptural teaching in universities was never given to divinity students (though, significantly, there was a chair for the 'Professor of Controversy'), and it was recorded that in all the book-shops of Leipsic, which was the great book-fair of Germany, not one Bible was to be found.

It is a relief now to turn to a fresh and more wholesome phase of the Lutheran Church. It was in 1674 that a new movement began in Germany which strove like Methodism in England to bring a dead society to life. Jacob Spener at Geneva had been startled at the preaching of Jean de Labadie, by whose influence the wine shops were closed, gamblers returned their gains, and dissolute men and women touched as by a divine power ; and in his own country, so dogmatically vivacious, so spiritually dead, he felt called to spread abroad that spiritual light which shone in his own heart. When he preached in Strasburg, Frankfort, and Dresden, Spener's teaching was a revelation to the ears of men, stunned by the clamour of theological debate. And yet it was no heresy he taught : he insisted on a holy life in those who taught as well as those who listened ; he refrained from denunciation of other creeds ; he showed that faith and charity and duty were marks of Christian life. In furtherance of his mission he formed schools of devotion—*Collegia Pietatis*—where men and women

met for prayer and instruction, and where small centres of piety were formed which spread in widening circles through the whole land. Its influence was seen in the court, the castle, and the peasant's hut, where Spener's writings were read and loved. It did vast good in society, breaking down social prejudices of rank, instilling a purity and devotion in home life, which lasted for many generations. To it is due the foundation of German and Danish missions to the heathen, and such a man as Francke, preacher, professor, and philanthropist, shed honour on the cause, and by founding his Orphan Home in Halle, which he began with scanty capital of seven *gulden*, he reared a noble institution of charity which originated many great works of Christian philanthropy. 'Pietism,' as this movement was contemptuously called, had able disciples in Thomasius, the professor of Leipsic and Halle, the first to condemn trials for witchcraft, and the use of torture for criminals, and in John Albert Bengel, the justly renowned commentator, whose *Gnomon* appeared in 1742, and whose apocalyptic work on Revelation unluckily fixed the millennium for 1836. It was in order to further it that Frederick William I. of Brandenburg established the university of Halle in 1694 which he filled with pietistic professors who first prelected on Scripture, and founded the great exegetical literature of Germany. In thirty years, over 6000 students passed from its walls to spread in the Church its religious teaching. As may be imagined the old pastors did not like this new doctrine of a man who formed churchlets in the Church,—*ecclesiolae in ecclesia*,—who taught that a layman could preach as truly as a man who spent ten years in a university to learn dogmatism and

dogmas. Violently many railed from the pulpits against Pietism, and calumniated the Pietists, till edicts were issued in Poland, in Prussia, Saxony, and even Sweden and Denmark, forbidding such defamation of men, for whose enthusiasm the sovereigns had at the same time profound contempt. But all in vain ; ministers claimed as a duty to God the use of the *elenchus*, or of public reproof ; for it is notable how these divines, to sanction every exercise of intolerance, always invoked the name of God, as a Cossack of the Don when he fires at his enemy, to give greater surety to his aim, mutters the doxology 'in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.'

It is easy to ridicule a pious movement, and unfortunately its disciples did their utmost to make this ridiculous. Directors of Pietist congregations kept weekly registers of all the frames of mind experienced by members during the week, and inquired strictly into the sequence of emotions felt by each ; those who had played at cards or danced were excluded from the Lord's Supper ; persons mistook their dreams and foolish feelings for the inspiration of God, and found in apocalyptic writings their congenial pasture. It was a favourite custom in cases of doubt to open suddenly upon a verse of the Bible or hymn-book, and from the tenor of the sentence on which the right thumb rested to decide their silly doubts, and this custom, which still lasts amongst the people, was, by opponents, ridiculed by the name of 'thumbing.' Frederick William, in 1729, ordered that no minister should take a charge in Prussia, unless he had studied two years in pious Halle, and had a certificate of being in a state of grace. Pietists in *the guise of* pedlars went from district to district ex-

tolling their wares and the 'pearl of great price.' In every grade of society, among ladies at the castle, and artisans in the town, among the miners of Würtemberg, among the citizens of Berlin, these Pietists, or *Stillen im Lande* as they called themselves, dressed in sad-coloured clothes, were to be found full of excited religious feeling. But this cause suffered the doom of all noble measures, of being degraded by ignoble followers, and in time, bigotry, pharisaism, spiritual conceit, and censoriousness became the marks of that once high calling. As Spener himself complained, 'his friends did him more harm than all his enemies.' Although the spirit lasted long, and the influence lasts still, especially in Würtemberg, the movement disappeared from the main current of the Church's life, and passed into such channels as the Moravian body.

It was inevitable that this religious revival should bring about a reaction. The emotions of society had been touched, but the intellect had not yet been stirred. When the last century opened there was a busy interchange of thought between cities and countries, and new political, social, and scientific ideas were active in men's minds. Now began, instead of the harmless Pietism which rigid dogmatists denounced, a new movement, which in time, as Rationalism, was to undermine alike the doctrines the Lutherans swore at, and the creed they swore by. This philosophical spirit came as a friend to revelation; it ended as its foe. Following in the wake of the famed Leibnitz, who held reason confirmed Scripture, and that the Trinity and Lutheran sacramental doctrine could be proved by mathematics, Christian Wolf, professor of Natural Physics in Halle, sought by similar means

to support Christianity. A Lutheran by faith and practice, he lamented the never-ending wrangling. What a blessed thing, thought he, if all true doctrine could be demonstrated, and no ground for uncertainty and controversy be left. So his teaching that reason and mathematics could prove the Truth was received with rapture by younger theologians. The Pietists, however, were shrewdly afraid of the issue of submitting divine revelation to human reason, and they appealed to the Elector to expel so dangerous a teacher from his province. As the whole question was incomprehensible to his stolid mind, Frederick William only agreed when they slyly urged that Wolf was a fatalist, and that his Highness's favourite grenadiers might desert his service and plead that their wills were not free, and their conduct fore-ordained. At once the obnoxious professor was ordered to quit the State within forty-eight hours on pain of the halter. Soon great numbers of the clergy adopted the barren Wolfian system, and taught that rational clearness was a criterion of truth,—certainly not the usual method of German philosophy, where subtle ideas when formed into a theory often resemble air which only becomes visible when condensed into mist. From pulpits now came dialectical disquisitions bristling with elaborate terminology and definitions, full of phrases about 'pre-established harmony,' and 'sufficient reason.' When in 1740 the great now forgotten Wolf was permitted to return from exile, he was hailed with acclamations by every village he passed through, by every burgher in the town of Halle, by all the students in the university—and his philosophy became the fashion. It *appropriately* fitted in with this new intellectual

movement, that in the middle of the last century the deistic works of England by Toland, Tindal, and Chubb—proving that natural religion was alone worthy of reception—were translated into German. In Prussia they were received with eagerness; the lawyer, the shopkeeper, the soldier, all read these works, as a revelation against Revelation, as a welcome emancipation from the barren dogmatism of their land: and works which only raised a ripple on the surface of English life, helped to stir the current of German thought to its depths. While many persons often complain of the rationalism imported here from Germany, they forget that it was from England the Germans first got their free-thinking, which they now return with interest.

By the irony of events it was the once pietistic Halle that became the seat of rationalism, and there thousands of students preparing for the ministry in course of time were steeped in the new teaching. There are many greater men, but few more interesting and devout than Semler, the founder of the neologian school, who had been bred in Pietism, and was repelled by its narrow and morose discipline. Professor of theology, he sought to expunge from Christianity everything that was miraculous, and by his famous 'accommodation theory' showed that Christ and his apostles, when they spoke of supernatural events, were only accommodating themselves prudently to the prejudices and ignorance of their times; the resurrection, the last judgment, were only politic concessions to popular preconceptions. In Jena, Göttingen, Frankfort, such views became prevalent; while as the works of La Mettrie, Diderot, and Voltaire were read on this side of the

Rhine, unbelief and 'illuminism' became the fashion in society. Frederick the Great suppressed intolerance, saying 'every man must go to heaven his own way,' but he encouraged at the same time disbelief as to whether there was any heaven to go to. Scepticism was rife among clergy and laity, and a 'Berliner' became synonym for a rationalist. Lessing supplied to literature wit, argument, and criticism to support the new unbelief. Ministers in towns renouncing doctrine gave sentimental and florid rhapsodies, and when 'Klopstock became fashionable, all young preachers who would be sublime preached in broken hexameters;' meanwhile many country pastors, believing more in their fertile glebes than the barren fields of theology, often lectured the rustic congregations on the best way to rear cattle and to raise crops. Thus the people were bewildered by rival supernaturalists and rationalists who contradicted each other in every parish on the very bases of Christianity. General superintendents and consistories strove to reduce religion to reason, and knowing that the loved hymns were the last retreats of orthodoxy, they expunged every phrase that could shock intellectual ears. The hymn beginning 'To Him the Triune God,' they altered to 'To Him the thrice Great God;' while with geographical accuracy the line in the evening hymn, 'The whole world is now asleep,' was changed scientifically to 'Half the world is now asleep.' These men had no poetry in their nature; no sentiment in their soul, and as Herder said, they 'squeezed religion dry as a lemon.' They did not feel the pathos, the wondrous beauty and spiritual force that lay in those Scriptures, whatever their origin *might have been*, in which the heart of humanity

speaks out in every mood of thought and feeling in all its noblest aspirations and all its deepest needs. Lessing, Schiller, Goethe, had little patience with men who were bad philosophers as well as bad theologians, though they had admiration for teachers like Herder, Court preacher in Weimar, who, while he did not acknowledge the supernatural guidance of the Bible, could show what a wealth of divine truth lay in these writings, which record the holy thoughts of ages. This narrowness of vision was the mistake of Semler, and still more of Paulus of Heidelberg. It was a triumph for Paulus, sincere and earnest man, to explain the appearances of angels at the time of Christ's birth by phosphorescent phenomena at night, or to show that the miracle of finding the tribute-money in the fish's mouth was only based on a story that Peter caught a fish worth a *stater*, and sold it for that price in Capernaum to pay the tax. Such crude rationalism was not scientific, and when Paulus died in 1851 the 'illumination' he taught in 1790 had been dead long before him. And yet the school of criticism then formed produced those scholars like Michaelis and Eichhorn, whose critical, historical, and philological achievements founded the great school of German Biblical criticism.

It was in such a condition of the Lutheran Church and German people that this century dawned; but in 1806 the great war in Germany broke out against the power of Napoleon. In the siege of cities, the defeat of armies, the humiliation of a divided and vanquished nation, there was much to sadden the hearts and impress the minds of men; then was fervid patriotism roused, then was exuberant sentimentalism touched, then were spiritual feelings excited in



an emotional race. When the war of liberation had ended a religious revival had taken place; there was devotion in home-life; the universities were full of students for the ministry; pastors became Evangelical in tone; there was a restoration of the fine music and the famous old hymns of the Church—an astounding collection of 80,000, many of which are, it must be confessed, more notable for piety than poetry, written by men who had drunk deeper of sacred Jordan than of the poetic Helicon. In such a state of feeling, as the year 1817 approached (on which was to be commemorated the third centenary of the beginning of the Reformation), the king of Prussia, Frederick William, thought a fitting opportunity had come for uniting the two alien Protestant Churches; especially the distinctive doctrines were now ignored, and the old hostile feelings were dying out. The well-meaning monarch issued his summons to his Evangelical subjects to celebrate the approaching jubilee by ‘forgetting all disputes and joining together to form a United Evangelical Church in the spirit of Jesus Christ,’ and he himself, who like his predecessors had belonged to the Reformed Church, partook with his court and garrison of the Lord’s Supper in the Lutheran Church at Potsdam. This admirable proposal was supported by the powerful influence of Schleiermacher and the Berlin clergy, and met with wide approval. In Baden, Rhein-Hessen, the Bavarian Palatinate, Schleswig-Holstein, and Hanover there was, as years passed by, an agreement with this measure, and the two bodies were formed in this confederation of churches, with, however, two conflicting creeds—it being left to particular districts to choose *Lutheran* or *Calvinist* pastors as they chose. The libe-

ral clergy were glad at a prospect of unity and peace. The rationalists were delighted at a measure which must relax the authority of Confessions by recognising conflicting doctrines, and certainly in the formation of a Church without a definite creed they had cause for triumph. The memorable name of "Lutheran Church" disappeared henceforth from official documents, and the name 'United Evangelical' took its place. Thus was the Church Luther hated joined to the Church he founded, and the religious community he settled was obliterated by that civil power which he had of old invoked to protect it.

The king, with overweening sense of his position of *Summus Episcopus* of the Church, had also composed a liturgy which he commanded to be used by all congregations, united or not. To his royal amazement his despotic order was opposed. Schleiermacher and the magistrates of Berlin denied the royal right to interfere thus in the ecclesiastical order of the Church, and with a bad grace he had to submit it to revision. In 1830, the third centenary of the Augsburg Confession was seized by him as a fitting time to introduce his amended liturgy, and it was now adopted by the majority of the country, because it allowed variety of forms for different States. Others, however, held back; rigid Lutherans and Calvinists were only offended by such changes in the communion service as the breaking of bread instead of the wafer, and the substitution of the unequivocal phrase, 'Christ said, This is my body,' for the simple words, 'This is my body.' Many who refused to read the king's liturgy were suspended from office, those of them who administered sacraments in private families were imprisoned; baptism could not be administered

in many places deprived of ministers ; in Silesia and Posen soldiery were sent to enforce the new service, and in one place the people were literally pulled off their knees by the hair of their head, in these vigorous efforts to have a United Church 'in the spirit of Jesus Christ.' Not till 1840 were these evangelicals allowed by law to organise themselves into a separate body, now known as the Old Lutherans. It is impossible to follow the successive efforts at ecclesiastical legislation on the part of kings of Prussia and the present Emperor of Germany—measures often abortive, always vexatious, which harassed the clergy, irritated the people, and bewilder the foreigner. The general constitution of the state church may be described as consisting of parochial consistories, formed of the pastor and church-wardens elected by the people, who are not necessarily members of the Church ; above these are superintendents and provincial consistories presided over by a layman ; and these again are under the supreme control of a Central Consistory—*Ober-Kirchenrath*—and the Minister for Public Instruction as representative of the ecclesiastical supremacy of the Emperor. But though there is not now a different Church in each of thirty-eight Protestant States, and soon all will be fused into one great body, there is in many diversity of worship, of liturgy, and government. Some have service-books which are strict, others omit every distinctive doctrine ; while in this Church without a definite creed there is every phase of orthodoxy, and every extreme of rationalism in States which exercise their separate governmental patronage.

During all this period of ecclesiastical organisation, religious thought was passing through eventful phases. Philosophy of the universities was modifying the

theological thought of the Church ; and indeed German theology owes far more to the speculation of laymen like Leibnitz and Kant in the eighteenth century, and Schelling and Hegel in this century, than to the independent speculations of divines. The result has been a super-subtlety of thought, and an exuberance of theorising, which illustrates often more successfully the profound genius of Germany than of Christianity. For the first thirty years of this century Schleiermacher was the most influential Christian teacher, and he gave a new direction to religious speculation. Gifted with an emotional sentimental heart, and a fertile and subtle mind, he felt that philosophy and religion were at one. Religion he pronounced dependent on no historical and documentary evidence, but on a direct, intuitive feeling of dependence on God ; that, he held, was the primary fact of the consciousness of man, whose faculty of religious knowledge was not in the intellect but in the heart. Accordingly he discredited miracles, the supernatural birth and ascension of Christ, feeling that these were not necessary to belief in Christianity and in the sinlessness of Christ. In man's religious consciousness Schleiermacher found the proof of the infinite God, and in this agreed with him Neander, the son of a Jewish pedlar, who became the most notable teacher and historian in the German Church. 'The heart makes the theologian' was the favourite maxim of this man, with kindness in his swarthy Jewish face, with the simplicity of a child, and the faith of a saint, who gathered from all quarters crowds to his class-room in Berlin.

Schleiermacher died in 1834, and four years later the world was startled as by a thunder-clap by the publication of a 'Life of Jesus' by a young lecturer in

theology at Tübingen, who had been under the influence of Schleiermacher and later of Hegel. He gave a new turn to the course of free thought and negative criticism. According to him it was not Christ who had made the Church, but the Church which had invented Christ ; the Gospels were a series of myths, which embodied the ideas and hopes of the Jewish people. Yet while discarding all the incidents of Christ's life and death, Strauss mystically maintained the truth of the ideas the myths expressed. Humanity is, he pronounced, the real Christ in which God is incarnate, which is sinless in the species, which dies and rises again, while by faith in Humanity man is justified. At the creed of Strauss, whom opposition and disappointment made more cynical and extreme, till he denied immortality or any God save the Universe, old rationalists stood aghast, and some, fearing to go too far into the stream, swam ashore. Soon the din of controversy began, and all parties joined the fray : theologians, bitter and narrow like Hengstenberg, and able and evangelical like Tholuck ; brilliant rationalist critics like De Wette, and devout and liberal thinkers like Neander, who protested against the intention of the Prussian government to put the book under the ban, saying, 'Let it be answered by argument, not by authority.' All felt its brilliant dialectic force and analytical skill, but many keenly detected the weak points in this iconoclast—with an unsympathetic nature, which could destroy but could not construct. The school of Tübingen headed by Christian Baur then sought to apply dissolvent criticism to the Epistles, which Strauss had applied unmeasuredly to the Gospels, and since then, as throughout this century, the activity

of theological discussion and speculation on every phase of theological science has taken the place of the old war of dogmatism.

It is not my part to discuss or describe the theology of Germany, which of late years has called forth the erudition, research, critical and philosophical powers of theologians who have made all European Churches their debtors. As some, however, think of all these centuries of strife and debate, they may recall how the priest, as he was showing the learned Casaubon the Hall of the Sorbonne, exclaimed in triumph, 'Here the theologians have debated for three hundred years!' on which the great scholar quietly asked, 'And what have they decided?' We hear much of the decay of Christianity in Germany, but it is not for us to judge the character of a neighbour nation any more than of a neighbour man, and it is clearly false to estimate the amount of religion in any society by mere statistics. It is true, we presume, that in Berlin only two per cent. of the population go to worship, and that the churches, though so few that they could accommodate only 25,000 out of 800,000 of a population, are wellnigh empty; that throughout the whole country only fourteen in a hundred attend divine service; that what are deemed the essentials of Christianity, if not of religion itself, are widely denied by rich and poor, and the rites and sacraments of the Church rejected; that Christian worship is lightly regarded by even those who passively retain it; that candidates for the ministry are few and insufficient; that the simplicity and faith of the country people are being obliterated by the law by which every young peasant is brought into towns for three years as a soldier. Why is all this if it be the fact? To

what is this wide-spread, deep-seated non-belief due ? There is to some extent an answer to be found in the story I have tried to tell : In the dulling effect of the tyrannical imposition of creeds, and arbitrary changes of faith, in a land where there were not only one but forty different State Churches dependent on lay authority ; in the undue exaggeration of doctrine over religion and conduct ; in the rancour of parties through centuries ; the follies of pietism ; the contradictory teaching of pastors ; in the religious indifference of the people engendered by want of practical concern in a Church servile to the state, and still dependent on the autocratic will of a monarch or the policy of a government. Will this decay of old faith give rise to a new and more permanent form ? We cannot tell ; but trustful hearts hope this Good Friday of a nation's faith may yet be succeeded by the dawn of a glorious Easter day. Many people, alarmed at the rejection, even by most conservative theologians in Germany, of doctrines regarding the Bible and the creed which Luther strenuously upheld, and dismayed at the widespread indifference to religion among all classes, forget the good silent work done by the Church, the missions it faithfully promotes, the pure and elevating influence of so many of its clergy and laity over society. Christendom certainly owes much to that Church which, though poorly endowed in worldly lot, is richly endowed with intellectual gifts ; which in this century by learning great and unwearied, by rare spiritual depth and philosophical insight, by critical skill and historical power in its theologians, rationalist and evangelical, has shed light on the great religious problems of humanity, and *done brilliant service to the cause of truth.*



# ST. GILES' LECTURES.

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*FOURTH SERIES—THE CHURCHES OF CHRISTENDOM.*

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## *LECTURE VIII.*

### THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCHES.

By the REV. COLIN CAMPBELL, B.D., Minister of  
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PRESBYTERIANISM, viewed either as a system of doctrine or Church polity, was one of the first legitimate consequences of the Reformation. It was impossible that the vindication of the right of private judgment in religious questions, which was the crowning glory of the sixteenth century, should expire in a popular clamour. Hence, in the first instance, the protest against the supreme authority of Church Councils and traditions issued, at least formally, in the adoption of the Word of God as the ultimate standard of truth, and 'the rule of faith and life;' and next, as an immediate result of that step, the ancient idea that the Church is more than the clergy, and includes the people as well, revived in men's minds. The development of doctrine which began with the assertion of the supreme authority of the Word of God, had a remarkably rich career in



the formation of Confessions of Faith, mainly in such Churches as were essentially Presbyterian. Compared with such statements of belief as are embodied, for example, in the French Confession of 1559, the Scottish Confession laid before the Estates in 1560, or the Belgian Confession of 1561, not to mention the Westminster Confession of 1646, all of them Presbyterian products, the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England—the only Reformed Church which maintained Prelacy—are extremely meagre, not to say defective, in the treatment of many essential topics. In itself, a slender Confession of Faith may be a positive advantage to a Church ; and, while one would hardly desire to see the almost barren simplicity of most modern Swiss Confessions<sup>1</sup> becoming universally prevalent, there is no doubt that the tendency of the present time is to allow more latitude to ministers and people to define various important Christian articles of faith for themselves. One great cause of this must certainly be found in the extraordinary mental activity of every Reformed Church, save the Anglican, in providing for her people as complete a storehouse of Christian

<sup>1</sup> 'In hardly any of the cantons are the ministers of the National Churches attached to the Confessions of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In Appenzell (Rhodes-Extérieures) the ministers promise to teach the Word of God contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament in the spirit of the Protestant Evangelical Church. In Thurgovia the ministers promise to preach the religion of Jesus Christ in the spirit of the Gospel, according to their conviction. In Zürich the ministers promise to preach the Word of God, that is to say, the Law and the Gospel, according to the principles of the Reformed Church. In Geneva the ministers promise to teach and to preach in all conscience, according to their light and their faith, the Christian truth contained in our holy books. In Neuchâtel the

belief as the ingenuity of men, set free from the dreaded authority of prelates, could discover. The spirit of such work was good, though the work itself was in too many instances overdone. If the spiritual burdens of the Confessions are being found in these days to be too grievous to be borne, it cannot be said of those who first laid them on men's shoulders that they themselves did not move them with one of their fingers. Every sentence of these formulas seems written in its author's blood, and every chapter is a martyr's monument. But, on the other hand, the inevitable law of retribution which lies in wait for the works of those who attempt what is impossible, by precisely defining spiritual truths which defy and elude minute definition, is overtaking the Confessions of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; and simpler creeds, less definite formulas, are now eagerly demanded in every Presbyterian Church in the world. A phenomenon of that nature is almost unknown in a prelatic Church, such as the Church of England, not because her Articles of Belief, as originally framed, avoided the danger either of over-exactness or comprehensiveness, but solely because the principle of Church authority in the interpretation of the Scriptural formula for ministers and pastors contains no clause bearing on their teaching. In several cantons (Bern, Schaffhausen, Vaud, etc.) there is still an official catechism of a decidedly Evangelical tone; but in these cases the use of the catechism is optional for the pastors and for the parishes. In almost all the cantons the pastor has a choice of several catechisms of different tendencies. In nearly all the cantons the officiating clergyman has a choice of several collections or of several liturgical formularies, corresponding to the different doctrinal tendencies. Alone, or almost alone, the National Church of Vaud still has an obligatory Evangelical liturgy.'—M. Chaponnière, in *Proceedings of First General Presbyterian Council*.

tures was naturally the first thought in such a communion of believers, and individual freedom of judgment, by a long way, the last. Consequently, we are not unprepared to find that in the history of the Anglican Church the chief difficulties have arisen in connection with the question of authority and orders; and, in these times, the largest amount of speculation has been devoted to the relations which ought to subsist on the one hand between the inferior and the superior clergy, and, on the other, between the whole body of the clergy and the power of the State. The Presbyterian Church, at least in Scotland, disposed of that problem at an earlier period of her existence, and if some sections of her people are still seeking solutions of it which are akin to Ultramontanism in its most absolute form, it is because in their hands liberty of private judgment has become the recklessness of individualism by forgetting that the State is greater than the individual, or any organisation which acts on the principle of 'a sufficient number' for the purpose of carrying 'spiritual' but illegal schemes.

Another illustration of the development of doctrine, in Churches essentially Presbyterian, may be seen in the rise and progress of historical criticism as applied to the Scriptures. On the Continent of Europe, the greatest activity in sifting, examining, and judging the written Word has been manifested in Churches essentially Presbyterian. The Presbyterian communities of Germany, Switzerland, and Holland have led the van in this work, and supplied the rest of Christendom with a rich literature devoted to Biblical criticism, which has afforded either spiritual

pabulum to inquiring minds, or objects of aversion to Churches and individuals that rely on authority. The attempt either to assimilate or confute these products of independent thought has frequently proved a valuable means of spiritual sustenance to both parties. In England, again, it is undeniably true that, with very few exceptions, literature of the kind just named, coming from Churchmen, has assumed more of an expository or apologetic, than a critical form, and great reverence is tacitly or avowedly paid to the authority of the Church. Of course, such a standpoint is not the true outcome of the Reformation principle of liberty of judgment and freedom of investigation. If in Scotland, for various reasons, our activity in this respect has been less conspicuous than that of our fellow-Presbyterians in Europe, we have at least followed them, though a long way behind, in compelling all students of theology, qualifying for the ministry of the three great Presbyterian Churches, to give attendance on the class of Biblical Criticism, in contrast with the requirements of the Church of England.

On this question of the interpretation of the Scriptures, the particular theory which any religious community holds as to the nature and the authority of the Church, has a great determining influence. The creeds of Presbyterianism, for example, attest by their very number the diverse opinions on doctrinal subjects that may be entertained by different bodies of believers who are yet at one fundamentally in accepting the Word of God as the only rule of faith and life ; but, as these creeds are careful to explain, it is the Word of God, as depending for its authority, 'not upon the testimony of any man or Church, but wholly

upon God' and 'the inward work of the Holy Spirit bearing witness by and with the Word in our hearts.'<sup>1</sup> But if, as in the Thirty-nine Articles, in one place the visible Church of Christ is defined as '*a congregation of faithful men, in the which the pure Word of God is preached, and the Sacraments be duly ministered according to Christ's ordinance,*' and, in another, it is plainly implied that the Church is simply the clergy, or rather the bishops charged with the power of decreeing rites and ceremonies, and authority in controversies of faith—it is not surprising that in course of time the more despotic belief of the two should prevail, and dogmatic divergencies should be left to adjust their claims outside the pale of the Anglican Church. Hence, we find, as a general rule, separations from her communion have taken place chiefly on the score of doctrine, and not upon questions of church-government; while in Scotland the ecclesiastical divisions are the results of contentions about the settlements of ministers and general Church polity, and not upon doctrinal points. The forbidden tree in both Churches has allured them by its promise of the fruit of greater knowledge and fuller life.

The almost insatiable appetite of Scotsmen for metaphysical speculation has been met on its religious side by the elaborate dogmatic systems contained in the Presbyterian Confessions, whereas upon other subjects which are therein discussed with less precision and fulness, or not mentioned at all, such as the right of patronage, the settlement of ministers, and the relations of Church and State, there has been

<sup>1</sup> *Westminster Confession*, chap. i. 4-6: cf. also *French Confession*, 1559; *Belgian Confession*, 1561.

more play for the national genius. It has accordingly had ample exercise in that field, with the result that Presbyterian Scotland to-day is divided into various religious communities, which accept, nevertheless, the same standards of Christian belief. Of the Church of Scotland and her two great Presbyterian offshoots at home, as well as her numerous progeny abroad, it may be said, as was sung of Doris and her daughters :

Facies non omnibus una,  
Nec diversa tamen : qualem decet esse sororum.<sup>1</sup>

Whether the maximum of individual freedom in the interpretation of the Scriptures which is permitted by the Great Charter of Presbyterianism,<sup>2</sup> in placing the ultimate 'persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth and divine authority' of the Word of God in 'the inward work of the Holy Spirit, bearing witness by and with the Word in our hearts,' will ever result in the identification of the work of the Holy Spirit with the judgments of human reason, it is difficult to say ; but, at least, it may be affirmed that there is warrant for such a development in the clause just quoted. The 'work of the Holy Spirit in our hearts' may be differently interpreted by different men, and only the consensus or majority of opinions in a Presbyterian Church Court can determine whether any one individual who claims the authority of the Holy Spirit for his particular judgment is justified in his claim. It may be said that such jurisdiction is only a substitute for what is known in Episcopal circles as the 'authority of the Church ;' but it is a substitute with a difference, for here again we encounter the rock upon which Presbyterianism is founded, the

<sup>1</sup> Ovid, *Met.* ii. 13.

<sup>2</sup> *Westminster Confession*, chap. i. art. 5.

fact that the Church is more than the clergy. The operation of the Holy Spirit is not to be confined to the hearts of one caste of men called the clergy, however well educated professionally, or however mystically consecrated they be. From the very beginning Presbyterianism has embraced within her definition of the Church, all ranks and conditions of believers; she has admitted the people to a share in every function, except those of teaching and the administration of the Sacraments, and from the day of the first General Assembly in Scotland, when only six out of forty-one members present were ministers, down to the present time, with a few interruptions, representative elders from congregations, Universities, and Royal Burghs have had a voice in the adjustment of doctrinal differences as well as in all the other affairs of the Church. 'Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them,' has been the guiding principle of Presbyterian communities all over the world.

This brings us to the feature which, in the popular conception, distinguishes Presbyterianism from Episcopacy on the one hand, and Congregationalism on the other. The offices and government of the Church, according to Presbyterianism, is vested in a body of presbyters or bishops, who are all of equal rank as regards authority, aided by elders chosen from the congregations to assist in the maintenance of discipline and other ecclesiastical duties. Presbyterianism and Episcopalianism are at one with regard to the source of spiritual authority; they are opposite as the poles on the question of the right of the people to any share in the government of the Church. Presbyterianism is

essentially democratic : Episcopalianism oligarchic in character. Into the grounds of the distinction which, Episcopalians allege, exists between bishop and presbyter, it is not our intention to enter, as that subject has been already discussed in the first two lectures of the course. What requires to be taken note of here is the broad fact that the Presbyterian Church is *of the people*, as distinguished from any other Church which vests ecclesiastical power exclusively in the clergy. But, while democratic in character, Presbyterianism has always maintained that no man may purely of his own accord, and on the strength of his own asseveration that he holds Christ's commission to teach and preach, usurp the office of presbyter, but must receive his 'call' to exercise his gifts in the pastorate of a congregation from the congregation itself. In this case, the *vox populi* is, technically speaking, the *vox Dei*. From its democratic nature we understand why the system should have so often come into collision with arbitrary power, and been so often associated with successful revolutionary movements ; but, as the Duke of Argyll has pointed out,<sup>1</sup> there is no necessary connection between Presbytery and democratic violence, for we find it flourishing in monarchical Britain, while Episcopacy is equally prosperous in republican America. As a consequence of this democratic feature, which prevents the ministers or presbyters from becoming a privileged caste, irresponsible to human reason, the authority of each is only binding on the consciences of the people in so far as it is corroborated by the teaching of Scripture. The same rule applies to the subject

<sup>1</sup> *Presbytery Examined*, p. 4.



of church-government as to the development of doctrine :—‘ the inward work of the Holy Spirit in the heart ’ must be the final touchstone for every man’s use, even in the introduction of new rites and ceremonies. Practically, however, great latitude is allowed in most of the Churches to the minister in the conduct of public worship and the government of the Church, provided things be done ‘ decently and in order,’ and in general harmony with the traditions of the system. The *ipse dixit* of any presbyter, however notable, is thus, in theory at least, specially guarded against, in conformity with Paul’s rejection of ‘ dominion ’ over the faith of the Corinthian converts.<sup>1</sup> The genius of Presbytery is hostile to the creation of priests or popes, that claim mysterious spiritual powers or ‘ gifts ’ unknown to others ; and if in some instances ‘ New Presbyter is old Priest writ large,’ we must remember that the saying is as vigorous in its condemnation of priestcraft as it is suggestive of human fallibility and proneness to spiritual usurpation. Both vices receive most emphatic contradiction in the system of Church polity called Presbyterianism.

In connection with this point, it may be well to remark here that, in the sacerdotal sense of the term, ‘ Apostolical Succession ’ has no place in Presbyterianism. With the Apostles the power of working miracles ceased ; the gift of inspiration, not to mention the requirement of having seen the Lord, though not peculiar to claimants for apostolic rank, was, nevertheless, a necessary qualification for the apostolic office ; and, therefore, in no true hierarchical sense can there be successors to the Apostles. At least, that is

<sup>1</sup> 2 Cor. i. 24.

the Protestant view of the matter. The claim to apostleship, which Paul found it so difficult to establish in opposition to the Twelve, although he could point to his having seen the Lord, ability to work miracles, speak with tongues, to teach and rule, ought surely to be impossible of maintenance in these days ;—yet it is astounding to hear of high ecclesiastical dignitaries, devoid of any of these apostolic marks, except the last, claiming as absolute a spiritual sway, outside of which there is no salvation, as if they spake and wrote under the infallible guidance of the Holy Spirit. Presbyterianism, in accordance with the spirit of Christianity, proclaims the universal priesthood of believers, and accordingly rejects an Episcopal system as a perpetuation of Judaism, under the infatuation of a false analogy, in the economy of the Christian Church.<sup>1</sup> The equality in spiritual authority of all who are solemnly set apart for the work of the ministry is only the recognition in the ecclesiastical sphere of the wider truth that there is no grace or chrism, which a bishop, or, for that matter, a presbyter, may confer by the laying on of hands, that is not equally within reach of every Christian soul, irrespective of ordination. At the same time, there is great gain to the Church and to the individual in having a class of men devoted entirely to the service of religion, and possessed of such learning, ability, and piety as shall qualify them in an eminent degree to be the leaders and pastors of the Christian Church. Hence the Presbyterian Church recognises Ordination

<sup>1</sup> The Great Hebraist Selden, at the Westminster Assembly, 'avowed everywhere that the Jewish State and Church were all one, and that so in England it must be ; that the Parliament is the Church.' —Baillie's *Letters*, ii. 268.

for her ministers and elders only in the sense of setting them apart for special offices. Between that doctrine of Apostolical Succession and the Romish one, there seems to be no *via media* or compound of the two. Either there is a mysterious spiritual 'gift' or charisma communicated in ordination, when the words 'Receive the Holy Ghost for the office and work of a priest (or bishop) in the Church of God,' are pronounced over a candidate, or there is no such transmission. If there is, there ought, in accordance with strict apostolic usage, to be present the medium of communication mentioned by Paul—viz., *prophecy*—1 Tim. iv. 14 : 'Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.' 'Prophecy, and imposition of hands, were the two *co-existent* circumstances which made up the whole process by the medium of which the charisma was imparted.'<sup>1</sup> The New Testament usage of the word 'prophecy' seems to imply *prediction* or *vaticination*, whatever else it includes ; and if this be so, we may well ask, who after the Apostles possessed the power of prophecy, so as to make a valid ordination, in the sense required by the doctrine of Apostolical Succession ? If now-a-days, however, there is no such transmission of the Holy Ghost from one individual to another, in ordination, then there is no true sacerdotal succession. In the first case, the ordination (and hence the succession) is a failure, because of the absence of 'prophecy;' and on the second score is it equally faulty,

<sup>1</sup> Bp. Ellicott : Pastoral Epistles *in loc.*—who does not define *προφητεία* here, but elsewhere (1 Tim. i. 18) gives the usual meaning of prediction.

because it lacks the prime requisite, the imparting of the Holy Ghost. If we adhere to the doctrine of Apostolical Succession, then 'prophecy' is a necessary element in the consecrating bishop—and the Church of Rome is as likely as any other Church to possess that gift, since she claims to be the direct heir of the Apostolic Church; but, on the other hand, if we believe that the whole economy of things was altered by the death of the Apostles, and prophecy and special 'gifts' ceased, ordination can only mean the solemn setting apart of properly qualified men for the work of the ministry, by those who have already taken part in that work. The legitimate consequence of a belief in Apostolical Succession is unqualified submission on the part of the laity to the clergy in matters spiritual; every independent access to the truth is closed up, and the authority of one ecclesiastic is the final source of judgment. With Presbytery, the process is the other way. In the Presbyterian Church, no value is set on the doctrine of Apostolical Succession; for the chief reason that, at the close of the Apostolic age, the functions of apostle, evangelist, and prophet, being extraordinary, disappeared, and the ordinary, and therefore perpetual functions of pastor (equivalent to 'minister' or 'bishop'), elder, and deacon should have taken their place instead of the usurped hierarchy which succeeded in establishing itself over the Church before the time of Constantine. So impressed were the compilers of the First Book of Discipline with this fact, that not even imposition of hands is therein acknowledged to be an essential ceremony in the admission of ministers to the pastoral office; but, in the Second Book, the recoil from

such an extreme position is seen in the restoration of the ceremony, not as a vehicle of spiritual endowment but as an outward mark of order. In this sense have the Presbyterian Churches ever understood 'Ordination' and 'Apostolical Succession.' The impossibility of finding a just mean between the notion of a sacerdotal priesthood, gifted with the Romish so-called power of 'binding and loosing,' and the notion of a body of men styled ministers, who are set apart for the offices of religion, has always deterred official Presbyterianism from claiming the 'power of the keys.' There have been, indeed, individual Presbyterians, both among ministers and people, whose language could not be surpassed in sacerdotal pretensions by the most devoted son of St. Peter. The true place for those spirits of an earlier time is not in the ranks of Presbytery, but in those of Romanism. 'By the reiterated denials of its own Reformers, Presbytery is prevented from believing that there is any authority on earth gifted with the power of binding and loosing in heaven, merely by virtue of its decisions here. Nor is this all : Presbytery is prevented also from believing that there is any authority in any earthly body—"Councils, realms, or nations"—which even on such matters as the interpretation of Scripture, can step *authoritatively* between the individual mind and its own convictions. Further, still : Presbytery does not believe that there was any machinery established in the Christian Church by which such powers as may have been given to the Apostles personally could be continued afterwards. It does not believe that there was any law of outward succession laid

down, so that those to whom such powers descended could claim from all men a recognition of their right.<sup>1</sup>

We come now to the subject of Church Polity. The belief which the Presbyterian Reformers held on the question of Apostolical Succession, and in which Luther agreed with them, is a foundation-stone of the Presbyterian system, so far as it relates to the representation of the people in governing the Church. If the ministers have no extraordinary or supernatural powers conferred on them by ordination, why may not the people share in the government? If, again, there is parity of power among the ministers, why should not the people have an *equal* share with them in the administration? Such is the actual fact in the most characteristic of all Presbyterian Church Courts, viz. the presbytery itself. It is composed of the ministers of a certain district, together with a representative elder, who is usually a 'layman,'<sup>2</sup> from each kirk-session in the district, so that of the whole number, only half, generally speaking, are ministers. We have said that our Scottish Reformers awoke in men's minds the long dormant idea of the Church being more than the clergy, and of being the people as well. Yet the founders of Presbytery were careful to guard the Church from becoming a democratic mob. They laid down the principle that the members of the congregation who should assist the minister in the government of a particular church and parish, should be chosen in an orderly and regular manner, regard being had to their fitness as men of sound judgment, piety, and

<sup>1</sup> Duke of Argyll : *Presbytery Examined*, p. 222.

<sup>2</sup> This unpresbyterian word is used, for want of a better.

blameless life. Moreover they were to be solemnly set apart for their office. This body of elders and minister, in which the lay element forms the majority, is the kirk-session,—the initial link in the chain of Presbyterian Church Courts. To the care of this body is committed all matters affecting the spiritual well-being of the parish and comfort and prosperity of the congregation, except the conduct of public worship, preaching, and the administration of the sacraments, which belong to the minister's province. The representatives of the congregation also assist the minister in determining who shall be members of the Church, entitled to ecclesiastical privileges. From the fact that the majority of this Court is chosen by and from the people it might be inferred that the minister's influence is but slight. That, however, is not the case, as the kirk-session, instead of fostering democratic oppression, is regarded by Presbyterian ministers as a valuable bulwark of Christian liberty in the performance of their duties ; while, on the other hand, the congregation possesses in its representatives a guarantee against the very remote contingency of a clerical autocracy. The kirk-session may be called the kernel of Presbyterianism. Complaints against the minister's life and doctrine or mode of administration may there be made in the first instance, on the legitimate ground that if the congregation has the power to 'call' or elect the minister that is to serve the 'cure,' it should also have the right of accusation. The two things have always, in theory, been associated in Presbytery, though it was only in recent years that the long-lost right of election was restored to the only Established Presbyterian Church in these islands, the

Church of Scotland. The people have thus from the very first, a direct interest and share in all the work of the Church. Not so in Episcopal systems, for there the distinction between things sacred and things secular is rigidly insisted on at the very outset, and laymen, with whatever ecclesiastical bodies they are associated, are not permitted to have the smallest share in the exercise of spiritual functions. On social and other subjects which affect the Church, their opinions may receive respectful consideration in diocesan conferences and synods, but they have no determining voice in guiding the policy of their spiritual rulers.

Were Presbytery to stop, however, at the kirk-session, it would be nothing better than Congregationalism. Each Presbyterian congregation has no doubt a certain power of autonomy in the management of its own affairs; but, were this all, it might become an isolated unit, and thereby lose much in preserving its independency, besides endangering the position and influence of the minister through the action of a tyrannical body of elders, or even one powerful, if wealthy, individual. But the safety, if not the worth of Presbyterianism, lies in this, that, just because the people are a component factor in the Church, the existence of a kirk-session for each congregation does not exhaust the idea, or give it sufficient scope. It needs a community of churches to constitute the Church, and a formal ecclesiastical association with other congregations gives each one the sense of a common brotherhood, a common strength and stability, common obligations, and ideals of Christian usefulness which no separate congregational life could



confer. In the body ecclesiastical, as well as the body politic, confederation is necessary for the preservation of 'the unity of the spirit in the bonds of peace.' Hence, all the congregations in a given district are associated together in one body called the presbytery, consisting, as already stated, of an equal number of ministers and elders. In a particular aspect it is a court of review of all disputes unsettled in the kirk-sessions, and, generally, it seeks to discharge episcopal functions over the district represented by its members. The Synod, a still larger court, composed in the same way, but embracing a wider province, exercises similar jurisdiction over the presbyteries which constitute it; while, to crown the system, there is the General Assembly, composed of deputies of ministers and elders from the whole body of the Church.<sup>1</sup>

Such is an imperfect sketch of the Presbyterian form of church-government,—a system which its founders believed had ample warrant in Scripture. The claims of the people of an entire religious community to exercise spiritual power, in an orderly and regular manner, as against an exclusive assumption of it by a religious caste, stand out prominently through all the varying fortunes of Presbytery in a way unknown in any other system of church-government in the world. In the one word, 'eldership,' half the history of Scotland is inscribed; while in another, 'the Church,' the sum of the nation's freedom and deliverance from ecclesiastical and political despotism may be reckoned on a long and bloodstained roll of heroic, if sometimes intolerant struggles.

<sup>1</sup> In the case of the Church of Scotland, the Universities and Royal Burghs have a right to be represented by elders at the Assembly.

It is impossible within the limits of this lecture to trace even in bare outline the various developments of Presbyterianism in the world. The Reformation principle itself has not had a more prolific growth. Even before the date of the German Reformation, the community of the United Brethren (*Unitas Fratrum*), in Bohemia, was Presbyterian in its constitution. Many of the countrymen of Huss and Jerome sympathised with Wickliffe in his demands for ministerial parity; while the founding of the University of Prague in 1348, showing, as it did, an intellectual ferment prior to any similar German movement, prepared the way for the new ideas of freedom and ecclesiastical equality. Conrad of Waldshausen stimulated the people with his preaching; the martyrdom of Huss and Jerome fired them with religious enthusiasm; the religious war of the period, as well as the violent persecutions which followed, welded them at last into the oldest Presbyterian community of modern times, the *Unitas Fratrum*, in 1496. It had ministers, elders, seniors, or superintendents, and deacons; a synod, and a general assembly. Their ritual and worship were austere and simple. Persecution in subsequent years could not crush them, nor Lutheranism entice them from Calvinism. Luther himself could only say to two of the Bohemian leaders, in the spirit of Paul's compromise<sup>1</sup> with the heads of the Jerusalem Church: 'Be you the apostles of Bohemia, we will be those of Germany; act according to your opportunities as we are doing here.' The work prospered, but changes came. The introduction of the Jesuits, the Thirty

<sup>1</sup> Galatians ii. 9.

Years' War, and the fiendish cruelties of Ferdinand gradually reduced the once flourishing 'Unity' to fragments, which, in 1781, were perforce absorbed in the Lutheran or Reformed Church. They failed in 1871 to secure a purely Presbyterian constitution, chiefly owing to the Austrian dread of a democratic church ; but, even if they never see their desires fulfilled, the Bohemian Church will not have passed through five hundred years of labour and suffering in vain, so long as she can count the brave little Moravian community of Herrnhut among her noble daughters.

Turning to Germany we find as true a manifestation of the Presbyterian spirit. The fact is, all the Churches of the Reformation, with the exception of the Church of England, started on a Presbyterian basis. Luther believed as firmly as Calvin or Knox in the universal priesthood of believers. It was not his fault if other elements intruded to prevent the institution of a thoroughgoing Presbyterian system. The civil authorities, in course of time, acquired ecclesiastical power alongside of the clergy ; and, in spite of certain Erastian modifications, the present Evangelical State Church in Germany is essentially Presbyterian. The Protestant Churches in Rhenish Prussia and Westphalia are similar in constitution to any Scottish Presbyterian congregation. The ministers have elders and deacons to assist them ; there are also a *district synod* (the Scottish presbytery), and a *provincial synod*, composed of superintendents and deputies, lay and clerical, from the lower court. The proceedings of this latter synod, however, require to be confirmed by the State authorities.

But in all respects, save the last-mentioned, the constitution is Presbyterian. Elsewhere in Germany similar constitutions exist, and there is a growing desire to extend the system in other directions. Progress is in direct ratio to the introduction of the lay element in the German Church; new interests are awakened, more scope is afforded for the exercise of discipline, and keener activity displayed in missionary work. The system which received the sanction of Spener, Schleiermacher, and Neander—men so unlike in intellectual gifts but so like in religious instincts—may not unreasonably be expected to reunite the broken ranks of the German Evangelical Church,—one had almost said of religion in Germany.

Switzerland, commonly supposed to be the birth-place of Presbytery, next claims attention. Geneva, with which Calvin's name is inseparably linked, was undoubtedly the fountain-head of Scottish Presbytery; but Calvin was not the inventor of Presbytery, any more than he was the author of the Pauline Epistles. He was its first great expounder, as it may be traced in the Scriptures; and finally succeeded in reviving it as a system of church-government in Geneva. His first care was for the purity of the Church; and this object was to be effected by the exercise of *spiritual power*, viz. suspension from Church privileges, not arbitrarily, but by a decision of the presbytery, which was to be composed of the teaching and the ruling elders or presbyters. In theory, he sharply distinguishes the 'spiritual power' from the 'power of the sword,' and forbids the Church to resort to *finer, or imprisonment, or other civil*

*penalties.* But so great was the danger from the Libertines that Calvin's theory was tampered with, and the Genevan moralists hurried Servetus to the flames. The history of every Church is too full of the records of persecution for us to blame Calvin much ; and, if no extenuation of his guilt can be found by recalling similar instances of crimes done in the name of religion, let their magnitude teach us to refrain, at least, from affixing a hideous stigma to his one enormity, while others escape with a paltry censure.

Zwingli devised a slightly different system for Zürich and other cantons, with the result of placing more power in the magistrate's hands, if he were Christian. No two Presbyterian Churches, any more than any two cantons, are alike in Switzerland. Each canton is sovereign in its own territory, and there is no national synod because the ecclesiastical divergencies are too great. The individualism which is latent in Presbytery is nowhere pushed to such an extreme as in Switzerland. May we account for this want of cohesion, partly by the comparative immunity from persecution enjoyed by the Swiss Reformed Churches, in consequence of the rapid spread of Protestantism among the people, and partly by the independence of each canton in local and religious affairs? To the Church of Geneva, however, as the model of Presbytery, all Presbyterians must ever turn their eyes with devout affection. Certainly, no Presbyterian who has ever worshipped in its Cathedral of St. Peter, but must have felt that the true Rock on which the Church of Christ is built is neither a man nor a man's authority, derived from pope, bishop, or presbyter, but on the self-evidencing

power of the truth in the hearts of those who do God's will.

From unpersecuted Switzerland we turn to suffering France. Calvin's hand, as was natural, was imprinted on her Protestant Church from the first, and shaped it into Presbytery. The mercurial nature of the French aided the spread of the Reformed doctrines to such an extent that in 1561, Admiral Coligni could present to Queen Catherine a list of 2150 Churches erected, or to be erected. Their constitution was Presbyterian. Two years before, the first general synod had been held, at which a Confession of Faith was drawn up, afterwards known as the Confession of La Rochelle. Sanguinary edicts and religious wars only promoted the vigour of the Reformed Church, and at last, in 1571, the King granted letters-patent for the meeting of the National Synod at La Rochelle, with Beza as moderator. Next year the massacre of St. Bartholomew almost exterminated the Protestants, but the remnant struggled on, sword in hand, till the year 1598 brought them repose and relief in the Edict of Nantes. Notwithstanding this formal guarantee of liberty, uncertainty and danger lurked round the Presbyterian Church, till at last the storm broke in 1685, when the edict was revoked, but for which step 'there would probably have been in France at the present day, from seven to eight millions of Protestants.'<sup>1</sup> Hundreds of thousands took flight to foreign lands; all Church organisation as well as doctrine disappeared. To Antoine Court, however, and the labours of preachers, some of them women, the Reformed

<sup>1</sup> Pasteur Decoppet of Paris.

Church of France owes her regeneration in 1715, only to perish again in the Revolution. No less a personage than the first Napoleon restored her spiritual privileges, but the 'pious' third of that name would not permit her to hold a general synod. In 1873 M. Thiers revived the original Presbyterian character of the Reformed Church of France. As elsewhere, considerable friction is felt between the Broad party and the Evangelicals, but steady progress will be made, if the latter will not too eagerly press for a victory over the other.

The Reformed Church of Holland has ever been intensely Presbyterian in spirit, though not latterly in form. No Church was more thoroughly baptized in blood at the Reformation, or made a more gallant and successful resistance to Catholic Spain. The men and women, who fought and died at the dikes, who suffered unspeakable agonies at the rack and the stake, who 'sang songs of triumph while the gravedigger was shovelling the earth upon their living faces,' were Calvinistic to the core; and no wonder that their descendants desired a Calvinistic form of worship and government at their first Provincial Synod of Dort in 1574. The claim has been renewed again and again, but the State has never granted a complete Presbyterian constitution to a people who are thoroughly Presbyterian in their history and sympathies.

English Presbyterianism is as old as the days of Wickliffe. He held that 'in the time of the apostle Paul, two orders of clergy were held sufficient for the Church,—priests and deacons; nor were there in the days of the apostle any such distinctions as pope,

patriarchs, and bishops.<sup>1</sup> At the time of the Reformation it was the greed of power and the strong grasp of Henry VIII. and Elizabeth that forced the Church into Prelacy, for it cannot be denied that Cranmer and other English Churchmen agreed with Calvin and Melanchthon as to the essential identity of the terms 'bishop' and 'presbyter,' in the New Testament. The retention of Prelacy gradually alienated the English Church from fellowship with the Continental Reformed Churches, although for long there was perfect reciprocity between the Episcopal Church of England and the Presbyterian Church of Scotland. But the assimilation of King Edward's Liturgy to the Popish Missal by Elizabeth's commands, enforced by Act of Parliament with pains and penalties, finally severed the Church of England from the free results of the Reformation spirit. In proof of this, a powerful party within her pale to-day is not ashamed to abhor the very name of the Reformation. Appeals were made from time to time for the abolition of such names and functions as archbishop, bishop, and dean, and for other Presbyterian reforms, but the only answer was incarceration in Newgate. At length in 1572 the first presbytery may be said to have been formed at Wandsworth, near London, by fifteen divines, 'some of the brightest lights and the best theologians of the age.' In fourteen years 500 clergymen were in favour of Presbytery, so well did the leaven of Travers' *Book of Discipline* work. They desired the reform of the Church in ritual, doctrine, and morals, the religious improvement of the people, and the growth of Christian liberty.

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by M'Crie, *Annals of English Presbytery*.



Had these claims been regarded, there might have been no Protectorate, certainly no sour Puritanism to render virtue unattractive and amusement a sin. But the infatuation of James and Charles in forcing Episcopacy on their subjects, and trying to convert what had hitherto been regarded in the light of a *human institution* into a system of so-called *divine right*, precipitated the inevitable crash in 1642, when Prelacy and, subsequently, a few other things fell. In four years the high-water mark of English Presbytery was reached in the Westminster Confession of Faith—the work of English divines—which Scotland has ever since kept, perhaps too tenderly, as the apple of her eye. Soon, however, the Independents, who had derived their Congregationalism from Holland, and who had always resisted Presbytery because they fancied it interfered with liberty of conscience, overpowered the Presbyterians with the help of Cromwell's masterful sword. They, in turn, were swamped by the flood of Episcopacy that returned with the Restoration. But neither the 'Act of Uniformity' nor the spread of Independency was so destructive to the English Presbyterian Church as its own want of a complete system of government and its latent Arianism, Arminianism, and Socinianism, which were only 'scotched not killed' by the propositions and reasonings, forged in Dutch theological fires, of the Westminster Confession. Add to these causes of dissolution the aversion to creed subscription, the want of elders, and lastly the steady refusal of a religious Protectorate and an irreligious Monarchy, both equally Erastian, to grant civil sanction for ecclesiastical acts, and we have sufficient reason, with-

out the division on the doctrine of the Trinity, for the disintegration of the English Presbyterian Church. Not even William's Act of Toleration could save her. In these days, there is more promise of true prosperity than at any previous period of her history.

The story of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland has been already told in the first series of these lectures. Nothing further need here be said than that at present the membership of the Church of Scotland is 536,085, that of the Free Church 286,076, and of the United Presbyterian Church 174,964.<sup>1</sup>

The Presbyterian Church of Ireland owes its origin to Presbyterian settlers from Scotland and England. Change of sky did not change their temper or dogmas, for they carried with them, especially from the latter country, much of the Socinianism which had there proved such a strong disintegrating force. Similar disunion was the result in Ireland. Carrickfergus, one of the nearest points to Scotland, saw the first presbytery constituted, almost within sight of a Scottish army. At the Restoration Ulster could number a hundred congregations, but persecution diminished them, and it was not till the Revolution, when Presbytery once more ranged itself on the side of freedom against Absolutism and Popery, that prosperity smiled on them. The *Regium Donum*, originally bestowed for their opposition to Cromwell, was

<sup>1</sup> Taken from *Scottish Church and University Almanac*, 1884 (Macniven and Wallace). The returns are furnished by the respective Churches; consequently the same value must be granted to all. From some Parishes of the Church of Scotland there are no returns, while in the case of the Free Church, in the Highlands, adherents are often included.

doubled by William for their resistance to James II., but finally withdrawn at the disestablishment of the Irish Church. The long-imprisoned forces of Unitarianism broke out into independent life in 1829—a secession which led in 1835 to unqualified subscription to the Westminster Confession being demanded from all ministers. Since that period the history of the Irish Presbyterian Church has been one of uniform progress, although recent emigrations have diminished her numbers.

The American Presbyterian Church, like American society, is a congeries of different elements gathered from the old world—‘English dissent, Irish fervour, Scotch persistence, and Huguenot devotion.’<sup>1</sup> To Francis Mackemie, an Irish licentiate, educated at a Scottish University, belongs the honour of founding the Presbyterian Church of America in 1684, in Maryland. Philadelphia in 1706 became the first presbytery seat, and in ten years a synod was created. Of the subsequent growth of the Church space will not permit me to say more than this, that great difficulty was experienced in procuring ministers for the increasing number of colonists; that William Tennant, to meet the want, set up his ‘Log College’ at Neshaminy in 1726; that after many doctrinal troubles, the Westminster Confession and the two Catechisms were adopted in 1729; that in the Revolutionary war the Presbyterians to a man opposed the mother-country on ecclesiastical as well as political grounds;<sup>2</sup> and that after many vicissitudes the first

<sup>1</sup> Gillett's *History*.

<sup>2</sup> ‘The first voice publicly raised in America to dissolve all connection with Great Britain came not from the Presbyterians of New England,

General Assembly met in 1789. Strange and extravagant doctrines, imported by New England congregationalists, divided the Church in 1838 into Old and New School Presbyterians, and the slavery question in 1861 made a chasm between North and South in Church matters, which, though the Old and the New Schools have reunited, still remains unbridged in proof of the fierceness of the struggle.

The Presbyterian Church of Canada, originally composed of three separate Synods representing the three great Presbyterian Churches of Scotland, became in 1875 a united corporation. These Synods, consisting largely of Scottish settlers, were intensely Scottish in character. At the union, the Westminster Standards, with the natural exception of the chapter on the Civil Magistrate, were accepted as the doctrinal tests. The principal mission work of this Church is directed towards the conversion of the French Roman Catholics of the Dominion, who, in terms of the Settlement after the conquest of Quebec, receive in that province Government support.

Presbyterianism, chiefly Scottish in its origin, has perpetuated itself in Australia, New Zealand, South America, the East and West Indies, and Ceylon—in short, wherever Scottish settlers have established themselves in the Old or the New World. Some idea of the diffusion of Presbyterianism may be obtained from the following statistics gathered from the Reports of the Pan-Presbyterian Councils of 1877 and 1880.

nor the Dutch of New York, nor the planters of Virginia, but from the Scotch-Irish Presbyterians.'—*Bancroft, quoted by Dr. Prime at First Presbyterian Council.*

The sufferings of non-belligerent Presbyterians may be guessed at from the fact that to 'sing "Old Rous" was almost as criminal as to have levelled a loaded musket at a British Grenadier.'—*Gillet, i. 186.*

	Congregations.	Ministers
United States, . . . . .	9863	8912
Scotland, . . . . .	3180	3104
Transylvania and Hungary, . . . . .	2018	2017
Holland, . . . . .	1309	1593
Wales, . . . . .	1098	540
Canada, . . . . .	1020	750
Switzerland, . . . . .	900	1044
British Colonies other than Canada, . . . . .	710	580
Other Continental Presbyterian Churches, . . . . .	912	950
England, . . . . .	258	258
Ireland, . . . . .	600	646
	<hr/> 21,868	<hr/> 20,394

These congregations have six and a half millions of members, and represent a population of more than twenty millions. In this table, no account is taken of the German Reformed Church, whose numbers cannot easily be ascertained.

If the Presbyterian Church is thus cosmopolitan, comprising people of different races and languages, she has also been the mother of many divisions. In Scotland alone her descendants are very numerous, but not all her children arise up and call her blessed. Outside of Scotland, hardly any three Presbyterian Churches acknowledge precisely the same standards of belief, or subscribe the same formularies. Yet no other form of church-government except the Church of Rome could gather representatives from all parts of the world from Churches, which are not missionary organisations, but native religious communities. Divisions were inevitable, according to the thoroughness with which the Reformation principle of liberty of conscience, unfettered by the authority of councils or traditions, was grasped. Wherever the sole authority of the Word of God was recognised Presbyterianism flourished, but unfortunately not always in virtue of *that* authority. It would be strange, indeed, to find

that it alone of all ecclesiastical forms should present an altogether peaceable and unpersecuting course of development, or never come violently into collision with the State or the consciences of men. The amount of liberty allowed could not prevent the one or the other result from happening at times. Besides, the dread of schism is never before Presbyterian eyes. Certainly the Scottish Presbyterian is prone to divide and sub-divide, without being very uneasy on that score. He can remain aloof from Episcopacy with absolute unconcern, or look with indifference on his kindred according to Presbytery, because to him schism is no sin. To that man only is it a sin who acknowledges the claims of a sacerdotal Church whose authority he is forbidden to dispute, under spiritual penalties. Where such claims are seen to be fictitious, separation from a Church may in some cases become a man's most conscientious duty. Presbytery, in the spirit of the Reformation, keeps that door open ; but, while it is a positive good, the frequent danger is that trivial questions may, through blind zeal, be elevated into grave matters of conscience, and men, unwisely opposed, may gain a bloodless martyrdom for things of no lasting worth. The annals of Presbytery are studded with such warnings. The *dour* Presbyterians 'are everywhere the same set of men, and set in the same way, that is, their own way: always ready to give up when convinced, but never convinced if they can help it—willing at any time to part with their best friends rather than yield a point in dispute.'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Prime, *First Presbyterian Council*, 1877: 'We have a tradition [in America] that one of our Presbyterian fathers in Scotland, when moderator, prayed, "Grant, O Lord, that we may be right, for Thou knowest that we are very decided."' -

Yet, on the whole, this failing is surely better than the indifferentism to individual rights which is bred by continual deference to an authority that is purely assumptive in its nature, and holds the Damocles sword of the sin of schism over the heads of its creatures. Like all genuine forms of liberty, Presbyterianism is liable to abuse its capacity for differentiation into new organisms, but it is better to allow the spirit of life to expand in new growths, suited to the atmosphere of the times, than to attempt to preserve it in one unalterable form. To that capacity, combined with its recognition of the rights of the people to Church administration, is due the marvellous spread of the system over the world, a diffusion which is paralleled only by the Roman Catholic Church.

It is no secret, indeed, that many of the best friends of the Church of England desire to see greater elasticity imparted to her administration by the adoption of at least one Presbyterian principle, viz. : the admission of the laity to an adequate representation in the government of the Church. In this way the fundamental omission of the English Reformation would be so far made good. In that movement popular rights were swallowed up in royal and priestly prerogative. The tendency afterwards was ever towards greater assumptions on the part of the clergy, until Laud could at last without contradiction maintain the principle of exclusive Episcopacy, although at first when he defended it he was censured by the authorities of the University of Oxford. From time to time voices like Arnold's have been raised for the closer 'amalgamation of the clergy and the laity, in the discharge of common duties, and in

the exercise of ruling power,' other than those of a mere churchwarden's functions, and signs are not wanting that concessions to laymen will be granted.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, strife must be the consequence of such Presbyterian innovations, when we remember that the encroachment of the popular element in church-government is viewed by the High Church party as nothing short of desecration. An attitude like this is all the more to be deplored on account of the barriers which it raises to friendly intercourse between the two Churches of England and Scotland. It is no improvement on the ancient practice of the former in receiving Scottish Presbyterian Orders; nor, unless more conciliatory counsels prevail, will the example of the late Dean of Westminster in inviting 'laymen' like the Very Rev. Principal Caird, and the Rev. Dr. Moffat, and others, to teach and preach in his Abbey, be likely to be followed. Alas! that it should be so. 'We ignore sixteen centuries almost: we dig deeper and deeper the trenches—which genial nature was kindly filling up with sweet flowers—to keep up the old division lines instead of building bridges to connect us as far as possible with the Church Catholic.'<sup>2</sup>

The Presbyterian Church, on her part, is quietly allowing many old Calvinistic trenches to fill up, if not with flowers, at least with the lumber of bygone warfare. Our theological athletes are not so enam-

<sup>1</sup> The House of Bishops quite recently gave a vote in favour of admitting laymen to take part in services held in consecrated buildings. The Bishop of London, however, in the undoubted exercise of his right, has declared that no layman shall ever have his consent for the discharge of clerical functions within his diocese.

<sup>2</sup> Norman Macleod. *Life*, ii. 128.



oured of the 'Alpine heights of the eternal decrees,' nor so eager to support the awful majesty of God, by the perdition of millions of the human race, as were our sanguinary forefathers. At no time did the Reformed Church of Scotland hold the horrible Augustinian dogma of the perdition of unbaptized infants; there is still less inclination to accept it now, or the modification of it, which insists on the necessity of baptism with water for the regeneration of a child. The Presbyterian Church and the Anglican as well, acknowledge *in their formularies* the same Calvinistic theory of the Sacraments in general, and the Lord's Supper in particular, and, therefore, on these grounds one might reasonably look for a basis of Christian fellowship; but, *in practice*, harmony between them seems hopeless so long as in the Book of Common Prayer baptismal regeneration is taught without qualification, and very wide scope is given to the Sacramentarian principle. Again, the two Churches are now almost identical in opinion on the doctrine of predestination, if formerly it occupied a disproportionate space in Presbyterian theology; and both now view human life less in the aspect of a period of *probation* than of *education*. Natural changes, and the softening effects of closer intercourse, have dissolved many doctrinal differences which once stood like walls of rock between the two greatest Protestant communions; may we not hope that, as every age produces the theology best adapted to its own condition and wants, many things, now deemed essential, will lose their paramount significance in the rise of a nobler spirit?

The Presbyterian Church, especially in Scotland,

has repented, if she has not fully atoned, for many excesses of the past. Everywhere we see evidences, in the erection of more beautiful places of worship, and in the restoration of such a majestic House of God as this, that present-day Presbyterianism repudiates the spirit and the violence which, whether by the hands of churchmen or statesmen of the past, destroyed beyond repair many of our noblest cathedrals and abbeys. The mere destruction, for which, be it remembered, the Scottish Church was not wholly responsible, frequently blinds our judgment in estimating accurately the shocking immorality of the times, which was but too closely associated with the 'consecrated' buildings of the Romish Church, and the storm of indignation which the state of morals raised in the minds of virtuous men. It is easy to condemn them, at our quiet distance of three centuries: it is better still to find some justification for their conduct in remembering that, with all their soul and strength and mind they fought against and conquered a system of belief which was alien to Christianity in its doctrine of a priesthood, and which is, even yet, the sorest trouble within the English Church. From the ruins of sacerdotal Churches our forefathers turned to rear the fabric of the General Assembly, 'the one guardian in Scotland of the people's reasonable rights, the one bar against their overthrow from anarchy or despotism.' A cathedral or two in ruins may awaken the long-buried sentiment which created them, and fair, if not as fair, temples soon arise on the old foundations; but the wreck of a nation's liberties is not an inspiring sight to the eyes of men who have long forgotten to be free. In the light and repose of

the liberty which our Presbyterian fathers won we may weep over the broken shaft, the ruined arch, and the roofless walls which bear witness to their turbulence, but not to their passion for freedom ; to their hatred of Rome, but not to their love of the truth ; to their death-struggle with clerical usurpation, but not to their devotion to the spiritual rights of man. And so we may misinterpret the past. Fanatical, destructive, revolutionary, our fathers may have been, but they were driven almost to madness and despair between selfish intriguing monarchs and a 'nobility who were rebels one day and servile courtiers the next.' Well is it for us to-day that the first Presbyterians in Scotland had native independence and sturdiness enough to resist both classes of oppressors, even though a few cathedrals perished. What were columns, and capitals, and towers, compared with the fabric of a people's freedom ? In happier times, when moderation sits secure by reason of the strife of the past, and faith needs not so much dread superstition, we may now rear nobler houses of prayer and restore the ancient walls without carrying the sword with us to the work.

This revival is not confined to the improvement of Presbyterian architecture. It has also reformed the whole ritual and worship, in accordance with early Presbyterian practice. Both movements are the fruits of the same spirit, the desire to appeal to the emotional and æsthetic, as well as to the intellectual elements of human nature. Our friendly contact with England in these days is annulling much of the mischief caused in the past by the rude interference of English Prelacy and English Puritanism with the

old Scottish ritual. In returning, therefore, to more decorous forms of worship, the Church of Scotland is not imitating Anglican usage, but rather reverting to a long-lost Presbyterian type. Thanks to the heroic struggles of the late Dr. Robert Lee, of whom it may be said, as of Samson, that 'the dead which he slew at his death were more than they which he slew in his life,' and thanks also to the quiet labours of the Church Service Society, whose converts are growing more numerous every year, the prayers and the praises of the Scottish Presbyterian Churches are now more worthy of intelligent religious communities. The introduction of a partial liturgy would be a distinct gain to pastors and people, while not inconsistent with early Presbyterian usage in Scotland and on the Continent. Music and hymnology, for both of which Presbyterianism has done so little, are gradually acquiring their true places in the service of the sanctuary. The tendency of Presbyterianism has all along been too much in the direction of regarding prayer and praise as preliminary or subsidiary to the sermon, thus making the service sermon-worship, which in its turn fed with lavish hand the merely intellectual side of the Presbyterian, to the neglect of his emotions. The foible of Presbyterianism is to *know* and to *define*; consequently, the starved *feelings* occasionally revenge themselves in hysterical bursts of revivalism, and the most voluptuous 'pectoral theology.' Just as the emotions of wonder and awe were ignored in the building of our ecclesiastical barns, so there was little real beauty, natural or spiritual, in the worship rendered in most of them. All the strength of the minister, and all the ardour of the people were reserved

for the sermon, and the congregation, if they kept awake through it, called the whole a worshipping of God 'in spirit and in truth,' because, forsooth, it was prized, in its bareness and barrenness, as being the antipodes of the ritual of Rome! As surely as there is no inherent connection between ugliness of architecture and Presbyterianism, or between the sour austerity which preferred to pray for the health of King Charles II. to drinking it, and genuine Puritanism, so is there as little between the so-called 'simplicity of the Presbyterian worship' and the use of organs in the music of the Church, or liturgical prayers in her supplications. There was a time in the history of English Presbytery when the omission of the singing of the doxology was pounced upon as a proof of the minister's Unitarianism; later, it was counted Popish or Anglican to use it; in these last days, its use is happily regarded as a sign that we are returning to our Presbyterian fathers' ways, and so uniting in spirit with our brethren of the Church Catholic.

A word, in conclusion, on the union of the Presbyterian Churches in Scotland. It is a problem which must work itself out in various ways; but, we will venture to say, it will never be accomplished on the basis of disestablishment, for two reasons. First, because the Church of Scotland is becoming too strong in numbers and influence to be easily disestablished, and because of her wide gates, which are her glory, she is the only religious community in the country which is absorbing others into her comprehensive embrace. She can afford better than any other Church in Scotland to be truly Catholic towards Romanists, Episcopalians, and all other Dissenters.

She is free as no other is, because of her noble constitution, which guarantees to all her ecclesiastical acts the supremacy of law, and saves her at once from tyranny of the State, tyranny of the clergy, and from what is worse still, tyranny of rich individuals that sulk because their caprices are not gratified. Of all these facts, the last forty years of Church History in Scotland have made the people fully cognisant, and therefore they will not let the Church of Scotland go. Second, union with the other Presbyterian Churches should be resisted if the result would be to make the Church of Scotland less liberal or tolerant than she is at present. Recent events, both in the Free Church and in the United Presbyterian Church, have shown that they are not ripe, in point of sympathy and enlightenment, for union with a Church within which, as quite recent events prove, there is such ample room for the play of divergent opinions and liberty of conscience on the broad basis of the Confession of Faith. The people of the country, no longer held in panic by the troubles of the Ten Years' Conflict, see that the Church of Scotland is now in possession of every *benefit* that was contended for then, and a great many more that protect ministers and professors from illegal deposition or suspension, and they ask in amazement, Why should the Church of Scotland be disestablished? With still greater force is the same question asked when the work of the Church at home and abroad is considered dispassionately, in its vast and ever-increasing proportions. It may safely be affirmed that disestablishment, instead of uniting, as some fondly dream, the divided hosts of Presbyterians in Scotland, would only drive

them into sharper opposition. For one thing, the disestablished Church would need to possess a larger share of the spirit of forgiveness than her opponents are willing to credit her with at present, before she could kiss the rod that smote her, and peacefully assimilate with her quondam assailants. Degraded to the level of a sect by ecclesiastical bitterness and political adventure, she would, after the manner of sects, maintain an independent existence, as a mournful relic of a glorious historical Church, deserted by thousands of her people, who at present value her for her national breadth, and by hundreds of her best ministers and office-bearers, who would not wear the fetters of a narrower Church. It is not difficult to see that in such circumstances the cause of religion itself would greatly suffer, and genuine spiritual independence would perish. By preserving the Established Church there is a sanctuary for spiritual freedom, guarded by the State, which is unknown to any unestablished religious body in the country—not certainly the kind of spiritual independence which Cardinal Manning and the Free Church leaders claim for their respective Churches, but the liberty of exercising her proper ecclesiastical rights and functions under the protection of the law of the land. No other Church in Scotland but the Established Church exactly corresponds to Lord Moncreiff's statement at the Pan-Presbyterian Council of 1877:—'I think the doctrine of the spiritual independence of the Church can only be effectually and safely carried out in a State Church, where the governing body is not purely ecclesiastical, but where the people are truly and fairly represented.'



## ST. GILES' LECTURES.

*FOURTH SERIES—THE CHURCHES OF CHRISTENDOM.*

### *LECTURE IX.*

#### THE ANGLICAN CHURCH.

By the REV. JOHN MARSHALL LANG, D.D., Minister of  
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THE 23d of March 1534 was a high day in Rome. It closed the period of grace which, at the solicitation of Du Bellay, Bishop of Paris, the Pope had allowed the English court, before the passing of the final sentence on the great cause which for seven years had excited Christendom. A messenger from London was anxiously looked for by those who dreaded Henry's threat as to the formation of a confederacy of Protestant princes, or who shrank from the prospect of the schism of England from the Catholic Church. In point of fact, a courier was on his way with instructions which might have averted the catastrophe, but he was two days behind time. Du Bellay besought the Pope to delay for a week longer, but the cardinals, by a majority, decided that the judgment must then be pronounced. And the illuminations of church and palace, the salvoes of



artillery, the shouts of Spaniards and friends of Spain, informed the Roman citizens that the last word had at length been spoken, that, in the view of the Holy Father and the princes and jurists of the Church, the marriage of Henry the Eighth to Catherine of Arragon, the widow of his elder brother, had been a valid marriage, and that excommunication and forfeiture of his crown were the penalty of the refusal to accept this judgment.

The English King had anticipated the action of the Papal See. Ten months before, Anne Boleyn had made her entry into the capital. A strange tragic story, that of the beautiful maiden who came forth 'like a flower' to bask for three short years in the fierce light of royalty, and then to be cut down—in what manner there is no need here to relate. It is beyond the scope of this lecture to dwell on the successive acts of the drama which was played out when, amid the deafening cheers of thousands, she who had been pronounced by Cranmer their sovereign's lawfully wedded wife sat in the white chariot, overshadowed by the golden canopy—Death, all the while,

‘Scoffing her state and grinning at her pomp,  
Allowing her a little breath, a little scene  
To monarchise.’

Our special interest in Henry's suit and his second marriage is that with them we are called to associate the origin of the Church of England as a national organisation, distinct from and independent of the Papacy.

An inglorious beginning! yet it is one which, when

its bearings are rightly estimated, indicates the unique position, historical and ecclesiastical, of the Anglican Church. Let us observe two of the aspects of this position.

In the Continent and in Scotland the Reformation was essentially the working upwards and outwards of a religious conviction interpreted by men sprung from the people, whose conscience (as in Luther's phrase) had become a captive to the Word of God.

It was not so in England. There the corruption of the hierarchy, the unblushing scandals perpetrated in name of the Church, the progress of 'the new learning' which, as Fuller says, 'had come into the country in vats full,' the labours of humble men who travelled hither and thither hunted by parochial authorities, yet resolute in the scattering of their precious seed, had made the soil ready for the word of emancipation. But that word did not come as it came in other lands. There was no Martin Luther, there was no John Knox. It was the King who, for his own ends, broke from Rome, and his loyal people indorsed his action.

The crucial point with Henry was the Royal Supremacy, and, in his stout and vigorous maintenance of it, he struck a chord to which the heart of the nation vibrated. The multitude did not apprehend the whole drift of his contention. To them it meant that England was England, owning no jurisdiction of foreign bishop or potentate. During five centuries there had been a struggle on this matter between Pope and King. For dynastic ends the Norman conquerors had succumbed to Rome; but even they had

been restive. Now, it seemed that 'the bluff King Hal,' who, with all his faults, knew and loved and was loved by the people he governed, had shaken off a dominance always unwelcome.

Those who looked beneath the surface of events saw that the claim of the bluff King was really different from all that had ever been contended for. That the Pope was the fountain of ecclesiastical authority, and the Holy Father of Catholics, had been acknowledged by Saxons as well as Normans. Nay, it was the admission that the Bishop of Rome held the keys of St. Peter by the early British or Celtic Church, in the famous conference at Whitby, which settled against it the long-standing controversy as to the time of Easter.<sup>1</sup> The idea which took distinct form in the action of Henry had never crossed the imagination of his predecessors. He became the arbitrary, irresponsible ruler and orderer of both Church and State. Parliament, in its subserviency, conceded that his proclamations touching on things ecclesiastical had the force of Acts of Parliament, and he speedily took it on him 'to give order to spiritual persons in matters of doctrine and discipline.' He appointed a commission, of which Thomas Cromwell was the head, not only to visit monasteries, but to administer dioceses, to be a bishop above bishops; and the King's 'most humble subjects, daily orators and bedesmen,' the clergy, unconditionally submitted. There were some honourable exceptions—men who parted with life rather than accept this full-blown supremacy. Of the laity the most illustrious recusant was Sir Thomas More, and for his faithfulness he

<sup>1</sup> Bright's *Early English Church History*, chap. vi.

died. A few burnings in these days were of little consequence.

In a time of transition, arrangements theoretically indefensible may sometimes be necessary, must sometimes be tolerated. But an attitude of servile dependence on the crown clung to the Church long after the transition time had passed. Now and again the tone of its dignitaries was worthy of their calling—notably on one great occasion ; but during the Tudor and Stuart reigns they were for the most part content to wait in ante-rooms for royal smiles or shrink from royal frowns ; to bestow fulsome laudations on royal persons, and lose the calling of the bishop in the petty ambitions of the courtier. The impress of the political character attached to its earliest day has been always too evident in English Church history. When Parliament displaced the Throne, the same tendency appeared—the tendency to regard the Church as a mere instrument of the State. There never was more high-handed ‘headship in spirituals’ than in the decrees and doings of the Long Parliament. This, like other evils, was reduced when the royal power subsided to the levels of a limited constitutional monarchy, and with the growth of the people there was developed that marvellous power which is above all Estates of the realm, the power of Public Opinion. Yet the evil, although in mitigated form, remains. It is to be traced in the hindrances imposed on the exercise of discipline, in the confusion of the civil and spiritual manifest in ecclesiastical courts, in the muffled voice of Convocation, and, above all, in the want of sympathy between the Church and a large proportion of the middle and lower class of

the people—a result largely referable to alienations bred in the time when the Church belonged to the court and the nobility rather than to the nation, when the political subordinated and controlled the ecclesiastical.

A second feature in which the Anglican Church may be differentiated is suggested by the review of the days of Henry the Eighth. The Reformation is not to be identified with a mere protest and revolt. In rejecting the authority of the Latin Church, the Reformers set forth as the true authority Scripture without tradition—Scripture as in itself the rule of truth, containing all that is necessary for the service of God and salvation. And they insisted that all things must be examined, regulated, and reformed according to it. On this platform, the English King declined to place the English Church. He was a Protestant, so far as this was necessary to the vindication of his own rights: he was a Catholic at heart, and in respect of all that belonged to doctrine. Before the matrimonial difficulty had assumed shape, he won a title of which he was immoderately vain,—‘Defender of the Faith’—by a blast against Luther, and he never altogether abandoned his dogmatic positions. Mr. Froude describes the King as ‘divided against himself. Nine days in ten he was the clear-headed, energetic, powerful statesman; on the tenth he was looking wistfully to the superstition which he had left, and the clear sunshine was darkened with theological clouds which broke in lightning and persecution.’<sup>1</sup> Thus it was at the stage which we have reached. Lutheran divines, attracted by the English advance,

<sup>1</sup> *History of England*, vol. ii. p. 43.

indicated in the Ten Articles 'to stablish Christian quietness and unity,' which appeared in 1536, corresponded with the King. Melanchthon dedicated his commentaries to him. Henry sent Melanchthon 200 crowns, and he welcomed a deputation of Lutherans. But in an evil hour this deputation pointed out the abuses of the English Church. Henry's *amour propre* was roused. The theological clouds came down. His reply to the condemnation of his Church was the launching of the terrible Six Articles, which fixed what had been termed abuses as matters of binding force and attached penalties of death and confiscation to non-compliance with them. The stringency of the law was, shortly after its passing, relaxed; but it remained as the evidence, thenceforth, of the King's mind and the definition of his will as to the belief of his subjects. The English Church was and would be to him the old Church, somewhat lightened and relieved; wanting the allegiance to Rome; wanting monasteries and abbeys, whose revenues were drained into a treasury which, like the sea with all the rivers running into it, was never full; wanting certain other minor features: the old Church, with a more English face, but with substantially the same polity, faith, and worship.

The two minds which thus struggled for expression in the infancy of Anglicanism were interpreted in the two great works for which the brief reign of Edward the Sixth is memorable. In the Articles of Religion drawn up and enforced as the Confession of the English faith, the progressive or Reforming tendency is manifest. The Book of Common Prayer takes us back to old English or Catholic times. The history of these works runs nearly parallel.

Reference has already been made to the Ten Articles published with the sanction of Henry, and to the Six Articles, 'the whip with six strings,' as the Protestants called them, enjoined three years later. It was Edward's earnest desire to fix the cardinal points of the Christian doctrine, and Cranmer's pen was laid under requisition. He had many consultations with Continental divines. It is interesting to Scotsmen to note that John Knox, as one of the King's chaplains, was called to report on the draft submitted to the King. The Articles contained in this draft numbered forty-two. They were authorised in 1553, and the clergy and members of the Universities were called to subscribe to them. These Articles are undoubtedly Lutheran; the very words of the Augsburg Confession are sometimes transferred to them. Ten years later, by order of Elizabeth, they were revised and reduced to thirty-nine, the well-known Thirty-nine Articles of the existing Church of England. Augustinian rather than Calvinistic, they harmonise with the central positions of all the Reformed symbols. But they keep the *via media* which Anglicanism desiderates, and on the abstruse doctrines of grace, manifest the reticence enjoined on the preacher in the *Institution of a Christian Man*<sup>1</sup>— 'Neither so to preach the grace of God as to take away free-will, nor, on the other hand, so to extol free-will as that injury be done to the grace of God.'

Towards the close of 1548, the labours of a committee which sat at Windsor were concluded. The result of these labours was the presentation of the

<sup>1</sup> Published in 1537—the work of a Committee of Bishops and Divines, and signed by the King.

Book of Common Prayer. It passed rapidly through Parliament; it was first used in London on Easter Sunday, 1549, and by midsummer it had found its way into the several dioceses of England. Two great benefits were realised. The one that, whereas the service had hitherto been read only in Latin which the people understood not, it was henceforth to be read in the vernacular; and the other that, instead of a variety of service-books—five *uses* being specially indicated—and a confusion in the conduct of worship, ‘all the whole realm from that time should have but one use for worship.’ As to the material of the Liturgy, it may be allowed that it has received from foreign sources. There is a marked resemblance between the Anglican confession of sin and that of the Church of Geneva, which was a few years older. The form of words introduced in the revised communion office was taken from the French Reformer, John-a-Lasco. It is indeed sorrowfully admitted by high Anglicans that the hand of the alien is traceable in their holy book. One of the *Tracts for the Times* laments that the introductory parts of the worship were inserted ‘through the intervention of foreigners who, having shorn and left us bare of much that is holy and venerable, have necessarily put us into a degraded position.’ But that the Prayer-Book did not express the Reformation spirit is evident from the strictures passed on it by Bucer, and from the language of the theologian of Geneva. Calvin declared that in it there were many ‘tolerable foolish things,’ and added that whilst ‘it was lawful to begin with such rudiments or *a-be-ce-daries*, the learned, godly, and grave ministers should enterprise



further and set forth some thing more filed from rust and purer.' Bishop Williams had a good retort on Calvin. 'He speaks of *tolerabiles ineptias*; Master Calvin has his *tolerabiles morositates*.'

The Prayer-Book is mainly taken from the old uses which, as we are reminded, were varieties on the ritual—different in several respects from the Roman—drawn up by Augustine, the first Archbishop of Canterbury. Cranmer omitted invocations of saints, altered clauses, made the whole more conformable to Reformed doctrine; but he translated the old Latin into that pure, quaint English of which he was a master. His first book was recast three years afterwards. It was again recast by Elizabeth, who wished to make it more nearly approximate the Roman order. It was further amended in the reign of Charles Second, and it was finally revised in the time of William, when nearly six hundred minor alterations were made. Generations of Englishmen have thus received it as the interpreter of their spiritual aspiration, the mirror of their purest and holiest feeling. All Reformed Churches had their Liturgies. But it is not too much to say that, though the Anglican Liturgy is not perfect, though there is need of more elasticity and freedom in the services which it orders, none can compare with it for the archaic beauty of the language, for the tender grace of the devotion, for the witness which it bears to the continuity of the Church of God by preserving so many ancient fountains of song and prayer, for the scope which it gives to the responses of the people, for many other charms and beauties. Those who follow not with Anglicanism may frankly concede that the English Prayer-Book ranks only

next to the English Bible as the most sacred of our national treasures.

Thus, 'much in sorrow, oft in woe,' the builders of the Reformation-period reared the structure of the Church of England. Let us pass over the dreary Marian episode, lurid with the blaze of those Smithfield fires, in which so many of whom the world was not worthy were consumed that it matters little whether the larger or the smaller estimate of the martyrdoms is accepted. Let us place ourselves in the closing period of Elizabeth's reign, after the scattering of the Spanish Armada, when Queen and country had returned to their rest. Thence, let us embrace in rapid survey the course of the seventeenth century until the day when William and Mary entered the palace from which the Stuart king had fled. The three features of this time may thus be described: Anglo-Catholicism, bound to the throne—'no bishop, no king'—in conflict with the Protestantism with which the liberties of the people were allied; secondly, defeated by this Protestantism; and thirdly, when again supreme, called to oppose the throne, and, though the advocate of passive resistance, made the chief instrument of a great Revolution.

I speak of Anglo-Catholicism; for this is a development of the period we are contemplating. Before the seventeenth century had far advanced, the Reformation in Europe was, if the phrase be allowed, crystallised. The time of reconstruction soon spent itself; and Reformed communions have remained, in polity and dogma, very much what they were when their standards were fixed. There is nothing more striking

than the comparative immobility of the Protestant Churches; the proportions of Catholics and Protestants have been scarcely altered for long, long years. In England there was no further movement after the revision of the Prayer-Book and the Articles. The Church system then was, almost exactly the Church system that is; and the Church system then, although lacking the old splendour and fulness, was so much the old system that the thoughts of Englishmen began to revert to this system. And the belief spread that it was not only fair and fitting, but that it represented the Divine ideal; that the hierarchy of England could trace their succession to the days of the apostles, and through that succession had descended a mysterious dower of grace; that the English Church was the inheritor of the traditions of the Catholic Church; and, apart from the hierarchy and outside her pale, there were no valid sacraments and no covenanted mercies. This was the tone of thought which the Court encouraged. It was fostered by the men of light and leading in the Church. Bishop Andrews shed over it the beauty of his holiness. Jewel was its apologist. The great Richard Hooker was its Doctor. The circumstances of the time ministered to it.

Elizabeth was forced, by the necessities of her situation, to link her throne to the cause of the Reformers. But she made no secret as to her inclinations. She declared ostentatiously that she was a Catholic. She hated doctrine, and loved ceremony. In her own chapel she continually violated the Act of Uniformity; and she tolerated elsewhere deviations from the established ritual—if in the Catholic direction. She

bullied her bishops, was rude and insulting to any who were married, made the lives of her 'Fathers in God' miserable by her whims and tyrannies. The air of her court was thick with the intrigues of courtiers who professedly were with her, who really were scheming with the Protestants whom she disliked. They fomented Protestant discontent; she sought to win over Catholic discontent. And not without success. Compulsory attendance at the parish church familiarised the children of the old Romanists with the English offices. Many of them conformed, without any heart in their conformity. Still, the conformity grew into a habit, and even the more pronounced Romanists halted in their allegiance when, with Philip's defeat, the hope of relief from Spain died away. 'A generation arose which, excepting in books of controversy, knew nothing of any religion which differed from that of the Church of England.'<sup>1</sup> Thus, isolated as the English Church was—disowned by Rome, and herself refusing to share in that generosity of feeling which was one of the noblest features of the Reformation elsewhere—there gradually developed that hard, self-contained Anglicanism which has, ever since, received the adherence of a large body of clergy and laity alike.

If the result seemed, in the first instance, favourable to the Church, the events of the two reigns following that of Elizabeth—of James and Charles—were destined to prove the ultimately disastrous character of the policy of Elizabeth and Whitgift. Too late, it was found that the failure to comprehend the Protestantism of the nation in the nation's Church, the

<sup>1</sup> Gardiner's *History of England*, p. 156.

repression and oppression which had persecuted, ousted, banished some of the best heads and hearts in all the land, and had alienated the affection of the most earnestly religious part of the population, had lost the golden opportunity, had precipitated the catastrophe of rebellion in the once merry, loyal England.

Puritanism was the expression of the Protestant element in the Church, which the action of Henry had so far liberated—which the later policy of Henry had endeavoured to repress. Its power in the time of the Stuarts was the Nemesis of the coercive measures of the monarchy. To escape the rigour of these measures, many divines and others sought an asylum in the Continent. The English Church at Frankfort had a history which, in the struggles of its factions, epitomised that of the country. Some exiles penetrated beyond Frankfort to Geneva, and were attracted by the purity of its discipline and the simplicity of its ritual. The increased familiarity thus caused with Calvinism and Presbyterianism gave a new direction to English Nonconformity. It had gone forth from England a spirit of mind rather than a body of opinions; it returned to England, when Elizabeth became Queen, a definite creed, political and religious. The 'idolatrous gear' of bishops and clergy was abhorrent to it. It condemned all that did not seem warranted in the Word of God. It had acquired stricter views as to the Lord's Day. It demanded the equality of the ministers of religion and the purging of the Church of the remnant of Popish superstition. It was narrow and fanatical, harsh and stern. But we must remember the ordeal through which it had

passed. For its excesses and for its gloom, the Crown and the Church are in great part answerable. They had chastised with whips and scourged with scorpions not the least honest or the least truly English thought; and they had made that which should have been the friend the exasperated and bitter enemy. Through the length and breadth of the land, there was ferment, division, bitterness of feeling. Fuller has quaintly sketched the history of Puritanism; 'in the reign of Queen Mary (but beyond sea at Frankfort), born; in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, nursed and weaned; under King James, grown up a young man or tall stripling; but towards the end of King Charles' reign, shot up to the full strength and stature of a man able not only to cope with, but to conquer the hierarchy, its adversary.'<sup>1</sup>

The hierarchy which it conquered was headed by onewhose name is indelibly written in the annals of the Church of England. William Laud is still to many the typical Anglican. In him, the teaching of Bancroft, which struck the note of High Churchism, found a thorough and fearless exponent. His main position was that the Reformation was only an incident in, not the origin of, the Church of England. He anticipated the idea which one who mused in Oxford under the spell of Laud, two centuries after his death, accepted as a landing-stage for a little—the idea that the Church was a kind of Catholic colony. He hated the Reformed doctrine. Abbott, Archbishop of Canterbury, regarded him as a Papist; in popular estimation he was. He was twice offered the cardinal's hat, and mildly declined the dignity. Let his

<sup>1</sup> *Church History of Britain*, book 7, § 23.

good be freely acknowledged. The condition of the churches and the administration of the offices of religion were often deplorable. He sought, though not wisely, to realise 'the beauties of holiness.' He was a munificent patron of learning. Outside the ecclesiastical sphere, he was shrewd, wise, and well informed. But all this availed little. He could not conciliate. He was proud and overbearing. King James had taken his measure, and his opinion was—'he hath a restless spirit and cannot see when matters are well, but loves to toss and change and bring things to a pitch of reformation floating in his own brain.'<sup>1</sup> It was unfortunate for Charles, grave, earnest, inclined to extreme views 'in spirituals,' that he had Laud for his adviser; it was unfortunate for Laud, arrogant, unable to discern the signs of the time, that he had Charles for his master; it was unfortunate for England and her Church that ecclesiastical government was given to Laud, and that Laud through the Church fought only for the interests of Charles.

The beginning of the end was the attempt—not without something praiseworthy in it—to establish uniformity of religion through the United Kingdom. The English service had been forced on the Irish people in the time of Edward, and its observance was maintained at the point of the bayonet. Scotland was without the Apostolical Succession and the Liturgy. James had endeavoured to carry out the Irish policy of his predecessor in his northern realm, but he had failed. It was reserved for Charles and Laud to make the second effort. With a wise king and a conciliatory minister, the effort might not have been

<sup>1</sup> Lord Campbell's *Lives of Chancellors*, ii. p. 460.

so disastrous as it was. But everybody knows that the needed requisites were wholly wanting. To do Laud justice, he wished to introduce the English Service Book, pure and simple. His adoption of a Scotch service—more Sacramentarian in tendency than the English—was in deference to the Scottish bishops. And the result was—the first flaunting of the ‘flag of rebellion.’

Now came the time for Puritanism. Laud, imprisoned as a traitor, was dragged to the window beneath which Strafford was borne to execution. The two friends exchanged one last look—‘the solemnest leave,’ says Laud, ‘that I think ever was taken.’<sup>1</sup> Before a year passed, Laud bowed his head on the block, and died. Events crowded one on another, until the victory remained with Oliver Cromwell and his Roundheads. One point only, connected with the struggle which cost the King his life, and ended in the apparent destruction of the old Church as well as the old State, falls here to be noticed. During the sitting of the Long Parliament, the famous Assembly of Divines was convened at Westminster: its aim identical, but from a very different side, with that of both James and Charles—a united Church in England and Scotland. The attempt to presbyterianise England failed, as the attempt to episcopalianise Scotland failed. A disturbing element in the shape of Independency hindered the fulfilment of the hopes of Presbyterians. And, though a scheme of Presbyterian church-government was finally voted by Parliament, the scheme remained inoperative, and gradually the Assembly dwindled away, leaving its Catechism

<sup>1</sup> Hook's *Lives of the Archbishops of Canterbury*, vol. vi. p. 343.



and Directory as monuments of its theology and its zeal.

When the period of chaos which succeeded the overthrow of the monarchy was closed by the restoration of the throne and the investiture of Charles Second with the crown of England, the Church resumed its former ascendancy. And alas! the old *rôle* was performed: promises of toleration which proved illusory, which ended in greater stringency; sharp protestations from the weak, met by 'biting answers' from the strong; conferences which increased instead of allaying the bitterness of feeling. The outcome of long controversy was the revision of the Prayer-Book which made the Nonconformists wish that the old had been left unamended, and another Act of Uniformity which, besides enjoining on the clergy 'an unfeigned assent and consent,' to the ritual of the Church, bound them to declare against the Solemn League and Covenant, ordered those not episcopally ordained to present themselves to the bishop, and obliged them to protest the illegality of taking arms, under any pretence, against the King. This was the fruit of the pledges sent forward from Breda, of the high-sounding professions of prince and prelate. Between 1400 and 2000 clergy left their charges. It was a hard task which devolved on the rulers of the Church. The nation had welcomed the old order and liturgy; but the internal condition of the parishes loudly called for reform. The social position of the inferior clergy had always been low. They were in general miserably poor. The picture of their state drawn by Macaulay may be over-coloured: but there are many evidences of their poverty and

degradation. No doubt there were many good country parsons besides George Herbert. But George Herbert—himself of gentle blood—sketching the parson, reminds him that he must not expect more than the rank of an apprentice for his children, and, exhorting him not to be ‘too submissive to the gentry,’ reminds him that he ‘must submit to the general ignominy cast on his profession.’<sup>1</sup> Many of the clergy were content to live as ‘tame Levites’ in the houses of the gentry, and occasionally, in addition to the reading of the prayers, to add, in consideration of their ten pounds a year, the duty of looking after the squire’s geldings. The conduct of worship, as was inevitable, was often slovenly; in whole districts, there was no public worship at all. When the bishops surveyed their dioceses, they found a state of matters demanding their utmost vigilance.

The bishops and divines of both the earlier and later Caroline era may be favourably compared with any other era. In the earlier, there are the great names of Jeremy Taylor, Bishop Hall, Dr. Hammond, and the holy Bishop Andrews. In the later, there were many, if not equally famous, respectable scholars and divines. Their influence would have been immensely strengthened if Calamy, the best of preachers, and Richard Baxter, the most industrious and fervent of divines, had accepted the sees which were offered them. But it is not too much to say that, whatever their merits, the heads of the Church were unequal to the work which lay before them. They were paralysed in action by the slavish deference to the crown, and the crown as worn by Charles.

<sup>1</sup> Herbert’s *Country Parson*.

Second and James Second! The Church was an instrument of government, and to guide the instrument in the interests of the Government was too much the aim of their rule. It was Nonconformity that ministered to the spiritual life of the mass of the people; but for it the religious vitality of England would have sunk to the lowest point. Men like Bunyan and Baxter spoke, as Church of Englandism seldom spoke, and too seldom in even the nineteenth century speaks, to the heart and the conscience of men.

But the day came when, for once, the Church, thoroughly scared by the King's Romeward proclivities, rose to the height of the national occasion. We never read of bishop confronting monarch, as John the Baptist confronted Herod. The vileness of Charles's court passes unrebuked, the amours of James II. are lightly passed over. But when, posing as the champion of liberty of conscience, James was felt to be manœuvring for Rome, the prelates took alarm. The Archbishop called his suffragans together. They agreed on a firm but respectful petition to the King. For the first time in its history the Church opposed the throne. What the seven bishops did: their nocturnal interview with the King, their imprisonment, their trial, their acquittal, when all London broke forth in acclamations, and horsemen spurred off to bear the glad tidings of the victory to the remotest parts of the country, are not these things told in stirring terms in the pages of Macaulay? A great hour for England! The one heroic hour of the Church of England! The hour which sounded the knell of the Stuart dynasty! As has already been said, the way of Revolution was prepared by those whose first

principle of politics was the duty of passive obedience.

In nearing the eighteenth century, we approach the modern era of English history. We are reminded of new ecclesiastical adjustments, altered conditions in the spheres both of thought and action. There is a different tone in the atmosphere ; currents hitherto pent up begin to flow with steadily increasing progress. The developments of the time of William and Anne and the Georges are, in many ways, interesting to us whose life is lived in days of unrest and change.

When the throne which had been declared vacant was accepted by William of Orange and Mary Stuart the ecclesiastical state of England constituted a serious difficulty. The bishops and clergy, with some of the more thoughtful of the laity, were by no means clear as to his call to reign. They had wished him to be merely Regent. It was necessary to have guarantees for the stability of the Revolution Settlement ; could these guarantees be provided without alienating those who clung to the exiled prince as their sovereign by divine right ? The simplest possible form of oath was tendered, nothing more in it than the promise 'to bear true allegiance' to the reigning monarch. But even this was too much. The Primate, the saintly Bishop Ken, five other bishops, 400 clergy, among them Collier, the historian of the Anglican Church, resigned their positions. They became the Nonjurors, whose sympathy with the Stuarts was a continual source of danger, so long as a ray of hope remained for the Stuart cause. In future years, the

Nonjurors and the Quakers were the two most fervently religious portions of the English nation.

The next part of the problem was how to unite the discordant elements of English Church life, 'to endeavour a good agreement between the Church of England and all Protestant Dissenters, and to cover and secure all those who would live peaceably under the Government from all persecution on account of their religion.' Such was part of the mission which, in his declaration, William assumed. And it was not an easy part. He stood outside the ecclesiastical circle. His own predilections were towards simplicity in ritual and government. He was not a theologian, although he believed in predestination. He looked at all with the eye of a statesman, and a statesman whose chief interest lay in other directions. But the promise which he had given he honestly sought to redeem. Two bills, having this in view, were introduced. The aim of the one was toleration, the aim of the other was union. The one was quickly passed: and its passage through Parliament materially affected the position of the Church. 'It ceased,' as has been remarked, 'to be national in the sense in which it had been so before. The theory of its constitution underwent a revolution. It could no longer assume the attitude it had done—could no longer call Englishmen as by sovereign right worshippers within its pale: it gave legalised scope for differences of action, for their growth and advancement, and for the increase of their supporters in number, character, and influence.'<sup>1</sup> *Established Church, and protected Dissent* became thenceforth a feature of England.

<sup>1</sup> Stoughton's *Ecclesiastical History*, p. 120.

The other bill was never passed. For comprehension many without and within the Church anxiously looked. Without, the Presbyterians; within, men like Tillotson, Compton, and others. But the measure somehow was shelved. Tillotson, unwilling to abandon the attempt, obtained a commission, and drew up a scheme of concessions. Convocation would none of them. The old exclusive spirit asserted itself in the cry, which again and again reached the Primate, 'Nolumus leges Angliæ mutari.' The obstinacy of the clergy exasperated the Archbishop; and he resolved to have no more to do with Convocation. It disappointed good men like Calamy, who declared that 'the concessions would have brought in two-thirds of the Dissenters.'<sup>1</sup> It was the loss of a great moment—a moment never to recur—when the Church might have lengthened her cords, and strengthened her stakes in England.

It is impossible to become enthusiastic over the eighteenth century. The century was destitute of enthusiasm. The fire and inspiration of the former days had gone. A wave of feeling surged over the Church during the reign of Anne; but it was only a wave, and, when it withdrew, the age was more high and dry than before. Its chief priests were Latitudinarians, whose one desire was to vindicate the harmony of morals with Reason. Its 'poetry was without romance, its philosophy was without insight, its public men were without character; it was an age of light without love, whose very merits were of the earth, earthy.'<sup>2</sup> It was the period of alarms

<sup>1</sup> Calamy's *Abridgement*, p. 108.

<sup>2</sup> *Essays and Reviews*, p. 204.

about Christianity, and apologies for Christianity. Men walked about the bulwarks, and told the towers ; they did not go within, they did not realise the living force itself. 'Christianity appeared to be made for nothing else but to be proved ; what use to be made of it when it was proved was not much thought of.' There were great preachers—Tillotson, South, Barrow, and others. It has even been called 'the golden age of English theology.' But there was no catch in the eloquence, there was no power in the appeal. The sceptic seemed to be always looking over the shoulder of the orator or writer ; to demonstrate the reasonableness of his truth was the chief object of his argument. In all that time, the only names suggestive of deep abiding influence are Bishop Butler, the author of the famous *Analogy*, and William Law, the author of the *Serious Call* and of *Christian Perfection*. Law's *Serious Call* was the means of impressing many men who were destined to leave their mark on the religious life of England. One of these men was John Wesley.

John Wesley was the son of the rector of Epworth. After the conversation and writings of Law had impressed him, in conjunction with his brother Charles, he founded a small society, composed of undergraduates of Oxford. The membership numbered twenty, and one of the twenty was George Whitefield, a servitor of Pembroke College. They were nicknamed Methodists because they cultivated a Christian life according to rule and method. They were ridiculed, lampooned, abused ; but they cared not. 'They loved the world that hated them,' and from the Oxford apartments in which they were wont to meet

proceeded two rivers which made glad the city of God in the dull eighteenth century.

When Wesley proceeded on his mission to Georgia, Whitefield began his career as a preacher. He adhered to the lines of the Reformed Churches. He was the exponent of the long suppressed Evangelical sentiment. In him was presented the strange spectacle of a Churchman preaching like Richard Baxter, 'as a dying man to dying men.' The world went after him. No building could contain the crowds which flocked to him. The clergy were ruffled out of their complacency by the manner of his appeals—and their churches were closed against him. He preached in the open air, and men and women by thousands listened, were melted by his entreaty, or awed by his warnings. He was not learned, but if ever man was eloquent he was. There can be no reasonable doubt of his thorough sincerity. He meant what he said when he exclaimed, 'Let the name of George Whitefield perish if God be glorified.' He originated no sect; he can scarcely even be called the originator of any school or party. But he was the chief centre of a new earnestness which, 'like a dayspring from on high,' visited the Church of England. John Newton, Thomas Scott, Joseph Milne, and Henry Venn were its first evangelists; and among the great men of its earlier days we can reckon Charles Simeon and William Wilberforce.

The history of 'the ecclesiastical dynasty of which Wesley was at once the founder, the lawgiver, and the head,' will be the subject of a future lecture in this series. It need only now be said that it has been rendered auxiliary in a remarkable degree to



the promotion of religion, and that it has reacted helpfully even on the Church which still casts tender glances on her daughter. In her special mission services, and otherwise, the English Church has appropriated—to her great advantage—many parts of the organisation and order of Methodism.

Before the close of the eighteenth century the efficiency of the Church had been both weakened and strengthened. A great organisation had gone forth from her, had been allowed to assume the place of a dissenting communion. On the other hand a new activity was manifest within her borders—an activity which, in kindlier form, recalled the Puritanism of the Elizabeth and Caroline times. A party, glorying in the title Evangelical, was one of the factors in her midst. The ‘three-decker pulpit’ and the Evangelical clergyman were familiar features—objects of ridicule to those who clung to the memories of Parker and Laud ; but the Olney hymns of Cowper and Newton, the hymns of Toplady, the sermons of Simeon, the oratory of Exeter Hall, the zeal which originated the Church Missionary Society and the British and Foreign Bible Society were the tokens of a vitality which it was impossible to deny. The vitality, as the way is, acted even on those who did not receive it. It influenced remote country parsonages. It often irritated, but it roused the energies of bishops. The incubus of the rationalistic habit of thought which had spread through the period of the first and second Georges was shaken off; Christianity was realised as not a thing merely to be proved, but as a living fire, as the power of God to salvation. The tone of sentiment as to the duty and the office of

the Church was heightened. And with this the whole *morale* of the clergy was improved. Hitherto the Church had been too much the creature of the court and the adjunct of the aristocracy and squirearchy : now she began to speak and labour with a new force as the prophet of the Eternal to all the people.

Oxford, the starting-point of the reaction from indifference and formalism which has just been outlined, was the scene of a later, and in some respects even more remarkable movement. In the beginning of the nineteenth century, the old College of Oriel occupied the front place among the Colleges as a centre of intellectual activity. Its fellows and tutors were marked men. 'What was more,' says Mr. Mozley, 'its most prominent talkers, preachers, and writers seemed to be always undermining, if not actually demolishing, received traditions and institutions.'<sup>1</sup> In 1823, and two or three succeeding years, the coruscation of great scholars and thinkers was specially brilliant. Copleston was the provost. Arnold of Rugby, although not resident, was associated with it. Whately had not yet gone to St. Alban's Hall. Hawkins was a fellow. Keble's name was on its books. The three Wilberforces adorned its circle. Hurrell Froude, 'tall, erect, investigating, and explaining with unwearied energy, incisive in his language and with a certain fiery force of look and tone, seemed a sort of angelic presence to weaker natures.'<sup>2</sup> And—presence more influential than all—John Henry Newman was elected to a fellowship ; became a tutor. From the conversations, discussions, and intimacies of the men of Oriel came the departure sometimes dignified as a

<sup>1</sup> *Reminiscences*, p. 226.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 19.

'Restoration,' sometimes denounced as an 'Organised Conspiracy,' but whose deep and wide influence it is impossible to deny.

The departure was for long, and is still to a certain extent, connected with the name of Dr. Pusey. But Newman and many besides represent Keble as its 'true and primary author.' He was the 'sun of the little Oriel world.' His *Christian Year*, published in 1827, 'when the general tone of religious literature was so nerveless and impotent, struck an original note, and woke up in the hearts of thousands a new music, the music of a school long unknown in England.'<sup>1</sup> The poetry, often obscure in meaning, and often by no means faultless in verse, was yet the interpretation of the most tender Christian feeling wedded to the idea of the Church and of the Sacramental system. A new direction was almost insensibly given to the piety of Anglicans. The aim of the volume was 'to bring thoughts and feelings into more entire unison with those recommended and exemplified in the Prayer-Book.'<sup>2</sup> It accomplished this aim in the case of thousands; but, doing so, it separated from the dogmatic teaching which had been expounded from 'three-decker pulpits,' and prepared for a teaching, giving more scope for reverence and awe and mystery. Keble the poet preached, the year after the publication of his poetry, a sermon in the University pulpit on 'National Apostacy.' 'I have ever considered and kept the day,' writes Newman, 'as the start of the religious movement of 1833.'<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Apologia pro Vita Sua*, p. 18.

<sup>2</sup> Preface to *Christian Year*.

<sup>3</sup> *Apologia*, p. 35.

It interpreted convictions that had been gradually gaining in strength and consistency. On the one hand, the Evangelical life which had been evoked a century before had lost much of its fervour. We may discount the representations of those who joined in the Oxford departure as to the low state to which Evangelicalism had fallen in the University and through the country. Still, it must be conceded that the pith of the teaching of Romaine, and Scott, and Whitefield had become emasculated; whilst the neglect of the æsthetic, the depreciation of sacrament and rite, offended many to whom the Prayer-Book was dearer than the Articles, and who felt the power of the traditions gathering around the names of Hooker, Parker, and Laud. On the other hand, political events irritated the Toryism of Oriel. It was enraged by the proposed suppression of bishoprics and confiscation of Church property, by the removal of Roman Catholic disabilities, by the increasing action of Liberalism. The foundations of the earth seemed out of course; and to contend for the truth which was regarded as outraged—the truth of the Church of England, as the representation of antiquity, as possessing the divine order, as continuing the Apostolical Succession, as administering the sacraments which are essential to salvation—this seemed the duty binding on all to whom the kingdom of God was first.

Therefore the *Tracts*, the first of which was published in 1833. 'In a very few years,' writes the Editor of these *Tracts*, 'a school of opinion was formed, fixed in its principles, indefinite and progressive in their range, and it extended itself into

every part of the country. If we inquire what the world thought of it, we have still more to raise our wonder; for, not to mention the excitement it caused in England, the movements and its party names were known to the police of Italy, and the backwoodsmen of America. And so it proceeded getting stronger and stronger every year, till it came into collision with the nation, and that Church of the nation which it began by serving.<sup>1</sup> How that collision came about is a tale which it is here impossible fully to tell. Let it suffice to say that, as the *Tracts* became more pronounced in their anti-Reformation spirit the public mind became more and more alarmed. *Tract* 90 marked the *ne plus ultra*. When it was maintained that the Articles of Religion might be construed in even a Roman sense, and that they admitted of a Roman interpretation, a storm of indignation burst over the length and breadth of England, and the series was discontinued. The movement in distinct visible form ceased to be.

Looking back with a dispassionateness possible only when the mind is delivered from the heats of an unspent controversy, it must be allowed that there was a good side as well as a bad in the eight years' excitement of which the *Tracts* were the exponent. Some of the convictions out of which this excitement arose were good and true. For example, the sense of the Erastianism by which the due action of the Church was hindered, and the longing to be emancipated from causes that made the Church often the cat's-paw of a political party, and hindered the realisation of her own spiritual calling. And again, the

<sup>1</sup> *Apologia*, p. 76.

tenacious grasp of positive truth which marked the Oxford writers. Even when we differ from them as to Catholic doctrine, we can respect a zeal for the great dogmas of the faith which scorned all shuffling and all compromise. The Tractarians were occupied, not with mere matters of ritual, but with high doctrine. Newman could have had no place in a fight over a vestment. His care—the care of those with whom he was associated—was for Catholic dogma. ‘I have changed in many things,’ he writes when a Roman Catholic; ‘in this I have not. From the age of fifteen, dogma has been the fundamental principle of my religion; I knew no other religion; I cannot enter into the idea of any other sort of religion; religion as a mere sentiment is to me a dream and a mockery.’<sup>1</sup> Finally—unable though we may be to sympathise with its direction—we can at least feel that there was an element of sublimity in the effort to realise the Catholicism of the Church. These men felt the insular and isolated position of the Anglican communion; they felt that it needed the consciousness of relation to a wider and larger life, that it was too much a mere concern of the English State. The more excellent way, as we might argue, is to develop a closer and heartier sympathy with other Reformed Churches; but they were forbidden from this by their views as to sacrament and succession; so forbidden, that the plan of the Jerusalem bishopric, as a joint work of the Anglican and Lutheran Churches, precipitated the secession of Newman. In the only way possible to them, they endeavoured to claim for England her inheritance in the one visible

<sup>1</sup> *Apologia*, p. 49.

Church—not the creation of Thomas Cromwell, but founded on the apostles and prophets, and having, as the arteries of the Divine Life, sacraments, symbols, and rites. That we disavow their contention, need not prevent us from discerning it as one beautiful and noble.

What was the issue of the movement which in 1841 was abruptly concluded? Did it disappear, leaving no trace behind? This is not the way of the Providence of God. The name 'Puseyism' suggests the past—books, brochures, sermons, articles in magazines, speeches, and protests without number. But the views consolidated into a mass of opinion during the controversy; and, when 1841 passed, the history of this mass of opinion may be thus epitomised; a fragment broken from it found its way to the Roman Church, and to this fragment accretions were made in following years. Another fragment assumed, in course of time, the shape of Ritualism. Ritualism has its root in the sacramentarian teaching of Keble and Newman; but it wants the strength of their position. It would be wrong to describe its fight as a fight over mere vestments and decorations; beneath what is outward there is a body of positive doctrine: but the issue, by which its controversy is concreted, is not that which Keble and Newman would have selected, and, undoubtedly, the spirit of disrespect to Episcopal authority which it manifests is wholly alien to that by which they were animated. The greater portion of the result of the Oxford agitation remains in the Anglicanism which characterises the most active and earnest life in the English Church of to-day. The doctrine of Apostolical Succession is being

gradually toned down. When men like Lightfoot<sup>1</sup> and Hatch<sup>2</sup> are liberal enough, sensible enough, to admit that there is no distinct authority in the New Testament for bishops, as an order superior to that of presbyters, and make little of the succession ; when men like Alford call the succession 'a fiction ;'<sup>3</sup> when thus the scholarship and moderation of the Church revert to the ground taken in the days of Henry the Eighth as to prelacy—expedient, with the authority of antiquity, but not prescribed by Divine authority ; it is obvious that the bastion reared by Laud and Newman is being heavily battered. Still, the polity remains as much as ever—nay more, perhaps, because resting on a more rational basis—an indispensable of the English Churchman. And the restoration of churches and cathedrals in every part of England ; the enhanced interest in the worship of the Church ; the increase of devotion among the clergy, with more firmness in doctrinal teaching, more attention to music and hymnology ; the deeper spirit of piety of the 'Church of England type' which pervades both clergy and laity—these may all certainly be claimed as, directly or indirectly, results of that breaking up of the fountains of thought and devotion for which the *Oxford Tracts* and Tractarians are responsible.

The present position of the English Church is, on the whole, encouraging. Lamentations over her state are sometimes sounded, even by those who fill prominent places ; as when the Bishop of Liverpool recently protested that he failed to see how it was

<sup>1</sup> *The Epistles of St. Paul: Introduction to Philippians.*

<sup>2</sup> *Bampton Lectures.*

<sup>3</sup> *Greek Testament: Commentary on St. John*, chap. xx.



possible that the Church could much longer hold together. But Dr. Ryle, in this opinion, is looking through the spectacles of that Evangelical party whose decaying influence has been referred to. There are, no doubt, causes of grave anxiety. How far the Church—aristocratic in constitution—will be able to adapt herself to democratic conditions; whether she will be able, without prejudice to her connection with the State, to realise a more vigorous internal discipline; in what way she can comprehend the diversities of thought in the nation without losing the distinctness of her teaching; by what means she can recover the hold over masses of the people which she has lost, and, adhering to her ancient lines, preach the Kingdom of God with clearer voice and freer action;—these are parts of the great problem she is called to solve. But there is no need to despair. We have seen within the last ten years four bishoprics created; we have seen churches multiplying by hundreds; we have seen something done towards improving the livings of the poorer clergy; we have seen Colonial sees founded, and devoted men, like the late Selwyn and Patteson, appointed to them; we have seen the Missionary Societies of the Church girdling with their agencies the four quarters of the globe; we have seen new forms of earnestness combining the excellences of Methodism and the purity of Evangelical doctrine with a simplified but distinctively Anglican worship: we have seen, within the last two months, the Convocation of Canterbury adopt, in three matters, a wisely liberal policy—opening the Middle Class Schools which it is proposed to establish to Non-conformists as well as Churchmen; by the casting

vote of the Archbishop, consenting to the admission of laymen to a part in conducting the worship of the Church ; and, finally, suggesting that power should be given to Convocation ' to form such canons or rules as may be found necessary for supplying the means of arbitrament in doubtful points without resort to litigation.' These surely are tokens for good, are indications of a desire calmly and charitably to survey the necessities of the day, from which it may be hoped that, by the guidance of the blessed Spirit of God, the English Church may, without either disruption or sacrifice of faithfulness, minister to the varieties of the English people.

If the lines of her progress are thus broadening, we must record the service rendered by a school of thought to which the name Broad Church has been given. This school has always had its representatives in Anglicanism. It has differences and degrees, from the most negative and hazy type of theology—if theology is a fitting word in the connection—to a theology, orthodox in its substance, but sweetened by a genial charity. But the characteristic of the school, as expounded by men like Maurice and Kingsley, and the late Dean Stanley and Archbishop Tait, is its preference for the moral and spiritual over the dogmatic and ceremonial in religion, its desire to bridge the interval between the Church and the culture of the day. I am not called to express an opinion as to the bridges which are thrown, or as to the views of the leaders of Broad Churchism ; but what I am called to acknowledge is the moderating influence on the general opinion of the Church of such a party, especially when the Primate of the Church is a man like the

late Dr. Tait, who united comprehensiveness of aim with the graces of a genuinely Christian character and a firm grasp of the great simplicities of the Christian faith.

The recent congress at Reading emphasised the need of simpler services, of a more anxious endeavour to make 'the dear old Church—not the Church of the rich alone, nor the Church of the poor alone, but the Church of the people.'<sup>1</sup> I may be allowed to say, Amen. The Anglican Church needs, as a thoughtful layman observed, 'greater variety, more earnestness, and more definite expression of doctrine in her services.'<sup>2</sup> Hitherto, she has been too much a social caste, too stiff and proper, too much disposed to find the religion of Jesus Christ in her system, instead of finding her system in the religion of Jesus Christ. May the increasing demands of the country receive an increasingly free and generous response, and may the years to come develop such capacities of use and blessing that the future shall be greater than the past! In behalf of many Scottish Churchmen attached to their own communion, and heartily adhering to the historic lines of its movement, I venture for the Anglican Church to breathe forth the prayer, 'Peace be within thy walls and prosperity within thy palaces.'

<sup>1</sup> Bishop of Bedford, *Report of Church Conference*, p. 437.

<sup>2</sup> *Report of Church Conference*, p. 493.



# ST. GILES' LECTURES.

*FOURTH SERIES—THE CHURCHES OF CHRISTENDOM.*

## *LECTURE X.*

### THE SOCIETY OF FRIENDS, AND THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES.

By the REV. W. W. TULLOCH, B.D., Minister of the Maxwell  
Parish Church, Glasgow.

WHEN George Fox was gathering round him those followers who were the earliest members of the Society of Friends, the party of which the modern Congregationalists are the descendants, was for the time triumphant in the State. Puritanism, born within the only partially reformed Church of England, and long closely identified with Presbyterianism, was now as a victorious power represented by the Independents. Their statesmen and their soldiers had alike successfully fought the battle of religious and civil liberty, and were masters of the situation, and Cromwell ruled in England a king in all but in name. Their power as a political party was not of long standing. Had the Presbyterians been true to the instincts of religious freedom which they originally professed; had they not sought to

impose upon the people a yoke as heavy as that which they had set aside, they might have stood their ground. But the unspent movement of the time brought the Independents to the front.

At perhaps no period of English history do we find religious enthusiasm so strong or manifesting itself in more manifold and diverse forms than when the struggle between the crown and the people was drawing to a close. It seemed as if the spiritual forces then let loose knew no bounds, and as if no shapes were too grotesque and absurd in which the long pent up feelings of the country might find expression. The liberty which had been so long denied had at last full scope and became in many cases licence. Individualism, everywhere rampant, was a stronger force than religious tradition. 'Theological speculation took an unprecedented boldness from the temper of the times.' Sect after sect arose—as many as sixteen were counted as existing in defiance of the law—and their ranks were recruited from all classes of society. Men began to think for themselves, and had recourse to their Bibles in search of the truth which they could not find in the religious systems of the day. The reading of the Bible deeply moved the heart of the country, and influenced the habits and manners of all. It was the one book which, more than any other, was read, studied, believed in. It changed the current of the people's thoughts; it coloured their speech; it became the inspiration of their every action. It awoke the nation as if from a sleep of death. Men and women everywhere became terribly in earnest as their sins rose dark and hateful in the mirror of purity and

holiness it held up before them ; with trembling eagerness they searched its pages for the way of salvation and an escape from the condemnation which they felt, now that their eyes were opened, they deserved. It is not to be wondered, therefore, that when the fetters of tradition were fairly loosed, individual conviction would take many and various forms, and result in a multiplication of sects. That these were tolerated at all was owing very much to the influence acquired by the Independents, to whom had fallen the brunt of the battle of religious and civil liberty.

The early history of the Independents is an interesting one. There had always been a large party to whom the Reformation in the Church of England had seemed very inadequate. This party corresponded to the more advanced Reformers in Scotland and on the Continent. Its antagonism to those in power came in the first instance not so much from doctrinal as from ceremonial questions, such as the wearing of vestments. The party received the name of Puritan on this very account, because of the scruples they had at many of the prescribed ceremonies of the Church. On the other hand Queen Elizabeth and her ministers were unrelaxing in their efforts to maintain uniformity ; and on this 'fatal rock of uniformity,' as Neale says, was the peace of the Church of England broken. Many of the Puritans were content to refuse to comply with injunctions they could not conscientiously obey, and to suffer for being recalcitrants. Others endeavoured to get what they considered abuses reformed and to carry out a further reformation. It was inevitable, however, in course of time, with the temper prevailing, that some

of the more daring spirits should seek to escape from their difficulties by severing their connection with the Church as by law established. These men were led to reject altogether the idea of a National Church. The Apostolic Church they argued was planted and organised without the aid of Caesar. Why should the example of its followers not be followed—why indeed should their practice not be binding upon all Churches? As early as the eighth year of the reign of Elizabeth (1566) a number of the Church's ministers, smarting under punishment for nonconformity in regard to some question of vestments, came to the conclusion that it was lawful for them to leave the Church of England and hold worship and Christian fellowship by themselves. In the year following the members of the first Separatist Church of which we have any record were surprised at their meeting at Plumber's Hall in London and sent to prison. Of this congregation—'the privy Church in London,' as it is called—the name of Richard Fytz is handed down as minister. The next name we meet in this connection is that of Robert Browne, from whom the Independents were often nicknamed 'Brownists.' They resented the designation bitterly, although Mr. Dale of Birmingham confesses he has never been able to satisfy himself as to the grounds on which the Congregationalists of the later years of Elizabeth so much disliked identification with the followers of Browne.<sup>1</sup> His life was certainly not a very reputable

<sup>1</sup> *Jubilee Lectures*: a historical series, delivered on the occasion of the Jubilee of the Congregational Union of England and Wales, with an introductory chapter. In two volumes. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 27 Paternoster Row. 1882.

one, and he returned to the Anglican Church and died in its fold ; but he struck the first note of a serious revolt from the National Faith, and defined in very plain and forcible terms the idea of a Church independent of the State. A Church according to him is a 'company or number of Christians or Believers, who by a willing Covenant made with God are under the government of God and Christ and kepe his laws in one holie communion.' With this holy communion the State had nothing to do, and he inveighs especially against the 'wickedness' of those preachers who will not reform themselves and their charge because they will tarrie till the magistrate commaunde and compell them.' Henry Barrowe and John Greenwood followed Browne in such teaching, and along with Thacker, Dennis, and Coppin and John Penry suffered death for their convictions.

Although Browne has been considered the first Independent, and Francis Johnstone gets the credit of having founded the first Independent church in England in 1596, it is to a Church planted in Leyden (the sect having been driven to Holland by persecution) by John Robinson that we must look for the actual parentage of Independency as it is now known on either side of the Atlantic. Robinson was a man of broad and catholic spirit, with no sympathy with the narrow views of the extreme Separatists, and his teaching could not fail to exercise the best influence over his brethren at Leyden. One of these, Henry Jacob, returned home in 1616 and founded, some say resuscitated, in Southwark, what is now the oldest Independent church in England. Others of Robinson's brethren had a still greater destiny before them.



Having sailed from Delfthaven in the *Mayflower* four years later, they planted on Plymouth Rock the flag of liberty and laid the foundation of the New England States. In America they were able to realise their own ideals and increased rapidly in numbers and in weight. It is calculated that twenty-two thousand Nonconformists sailed from English and Dutch ports fleeing from 'the fury of the Bishops' between the years 1620 and 1640. Finding refuge in New England the great majority of them, if not already Independents, became so. This rapid growth of Independency on the American Continent reacted strongly on England, and failed not to arrest the attention of the vigilant and zealous Laud. To him the New England States 'were a receptacle for schismatics from whence, as from the bowels of the Trojan horse, so many incendiaries might break out to inflame the nation.' True to his spirit, he wished to send them a bishop 'for their better government and back him with some force to compel, if he were not otherwise able to persuade obedience.' But he soon found out that he had enough to do at home where the cause of Puritanism was rapidly growing. On his downfall and the outbreak of the Civil War, New England Independency became more than ever an influential factor in English affairs. Its voice was heard to some purpose in the Westminster Assembly, before whose members and before the country at large the 'New England Way' was held up as a successful realisation of the ideal of Independency.

In the meantime, however, Presbyterianism was still the prevailing power in England. In the West-

minster Assembly, able as the 'five dissenting brethren'<sup>1</sup> were, the Presbyterians were in a large majority—and their dogmatic basis was really as inconsistent with the liberty claimed by the Independents as Episcopacy had been. The drift of the time, however, as we have already indicated, was on the side of the Independents, and the issues of the great war, as it passed from stage to stage and brought always bolder spirits to the front, rapidly gave them the ascendancy. And so it came to pass that a power which was non-existent at the opening of the Long Parliament developed before its close into the governing power of England. It was no doubt the genuine promptings of liberty embodied by Independency which, to a large extent at least, gave it ascendancy at this time over both Presbytery and Episcopacy.

Independency was therefore dominant when George Fox began his career as a preacher. The spiritual excitement of the age was moving with full volume. Many were waiting for some teacher to give voice to the deep sense of spiritual realities which possessed them. They could not find these realities near to them either in Presbyterian or Episcopal observances. Earnest souls, seeking help towards the divine life, could not find it to their satisfaction in either of these Church systems. Nor did they see in either an adequate power to raise and purify society. On the one hand there was gross luxury, levity, and licentiousness. On the other,

<sup>1</sup> Nye, Simpson, Burroughes, Bridge, and Goodwin represented the Independents in the Westminster Assembly, and were known there under this name.

there was a rigid external professional morality—an obedience to the letter rather than to the spirit of Christianity—or rather we should say, to the teaching of the Old Testament, for the love and tenderness which breathe in every page of the New Testament was hardly, by any side, recognised as a power by which daily life was to be governed. The Old Testament was the code or statute-book of the Puritans; its authority was binding; the practices of its worthies were to be imitated even when these were manifestly in the direction of cruelty, injustice, and oppression. In its pages excuses and vindications of almost any extreme might be found. Salvation was only to be found ‘in the way’ of those who fancied themselves the repositories of the Divine promises—was indeed only possible to the narrow circle of the elect. The High Church party stigmatised as heretics and schismatics all who would not adopt their views as to the priesthood, and give their adherence to the ecclesiastical ritual and Popish practices which were supposed to be necessary for the proper conduct of worship. The Presbyterian party regarded in the same light all who did not use their watchwords and conform to the unbending severity of their external discipline. Both were anxious to force their views upon the country by an appeal to Caesar, by the aid of the civil magistrate, the State, and to bring about the uniformity which was so dear to them. It is little wonder, then, that many men and women were sick of the contentions of rival ecclesiastical systems, and of the alternate tyranny and lawlessness of ecclesiastical leaders who were only apparently struggling for power: and that in the ruin of monarchy, of church, and of parliament,

they should seek in the exercise of their own spiritual consciousness, in the freedom of their individual conviction, for some haven of refuge, or some power of life which should meet their newly awakened spiritual energies. These energies became morbidly active, and a paroxysm of fanaticism took hold of the national mind and was by no means confined to the lower classes. Magistrates, ministers of the gospel, officers in the army, and gentlemen of property, all felt an influence which in time extended to the lower orders of society, and no extravagance was too great for the more fanatical adherents of some of the sects to commit. Many of these sects vanished with the excitement amid which they had sprung up. None have had so long or so noble a career as that of the Society of Friends.

The history of the origin of this sect is primarily the history of the intensely earnest, high-minded and devoted, if somewhat fanatical enthusiast who called it into existence, and of whose character estimates so diverse have been formed as those of Lord Macaulay and Carlyle. Upon the whole, Carlyle's seems the truer estimate. In the light of the enthusiasm with which he was consumed, the age in which he lived, the nature of the testimony he rendered and the sufferings which he endured, Fox's incoherent rhapsodies may be forgotten, and his vanity if not overlooked to a great extent forgiven. His soul was pure and true, his courage high, his force of character great, and his resolution unbending. What was said of his youth was equally true of his whole life : ' If George says Verily, there is no altering him.' He was born in July 1624, at Drayton-in-the-Clay in

Leicestershire. His father was by profession a weaver, a 'righteous man with a seed of God in him.' He was named by his neighbours 'Righteous Christer.' His mother was Mary Lago, 'an upright woman of the "stock of martyrs."' He was bred a shoemaker, but he did not like either his profession or his companions, so he felt called to 'keep out of all and be a stranger to all.' Consequently for a time he led a wandering and unsettled life. He seems to have been singularly unfortunate in his selection of spiritual advisers. His parish minister and he had long discussions, but George got disgusted with his pastor for preaching on First Days the views he had himself propounded on week days. Another priest ordered him to 'take tobacco and sing psalms,' whereupon he remarks, 'tobacco was a thing I did not love, and psalms I was not in a state to sing.' Moreover he ridiculed George's troubles, and spoke of them to his servants. Another priest he found an 'empty hollow cask.' While walking with a fourth and having profitable discourse in his garden, he in turning unfortunately trod upon a flower-bed, and this so provoked the priest that he was in a rage, 'as if his house had been on fire.' Another would hardly listen to him at all, but recommended him to try 'physic and bleeding.' Thus he was driven in upon himself—the wickedness and vanity of the world pressing more and more heavily upon him. He wished he had never been born, or that he had been born blind and deaf, not to 'see such sights and to hear such words' as he did. Meditating much upon religious topics, he became convinced that those were only 'true believers who were born of God and had passed from

death to life ; that to be bred at Oxford or Cambridge was not enough to fit and qualify men to be ministers of Christ,' and 'that God who made the world did not dwell in temples made with hands.' He passed his time in studying his Bible, living much in the open air, fasting and having great internal conflicts ; and although shrinking from public exhibitions he felt by and by irresistibly urged to give utterance to the spirit within him.

In 1648 he began to hold meetings. Praying at Mansfield, 'the Lord's power,' he tells us, 'was so great that the very house seemed shaken.' Though himself tempted sometimes to disbelieve in God, to think that 'all things come by nature,' and only able to overcome his doubts by hearing 'a true voice' saying to him, 'There is a living God, who made all things ;' he was yet able to dispute with and confound atheists who argued with him. He went to 'steeple houses,' as he calls churches, and warned the people against oppression, and oaths, and wickedness in general. On one occasion, when at church, the priest would not allow a woman to ask a question, saying, 'I permit not a woman to speak in the church,' George—who had already waged war with those who held that women had no souls 'no more than a goose'—sprang up and addressed the priest,— 'Dost thou call this, or this mixed multitude a church?' The priest, in reply, inquired what a church was, and he answered that 'the church was the pillar and ground of truth, made up of living stones, living members, a spiritual household ; which Christ was the head of, but He was not the head of a mixed multitude, or of an old house made up of lime,

stones, and wood.' Not only priests but physicians and lawyers came under his censure. They were 'all out of the wisdom, out of the faith, out of the equity and love of God.' They could only be reformed by believing in the light and walking in the light with which Christ hath enlightened every man that cometh into the world. This doctrine of the 'internal light,' of which he was to become the great exponent, and through the teaching of which he and his followers were originally called 'the Children of Light,' took a great hold of him. It was that 'light and spirit which was before the Scriptures were given forth and which led the holy men of God to give them forth.' All must come to that spirit if they would know God or Christ or the Scriptures aright. This truth was given to him, he tells us, as an immediate revelation; but he afterwards found it in the Scriptures. 'What the Lord opened in me I also found in them.'

Going forth to preach his newly discovered doctrine other revelations were vouchsafed to him. 'The Lord,' he tells us, forbade him 'to put off his hat to any, high or low,' and 'I was required to *Thee* and *Thou* all men and women without any respect to rich or poor, high or low, great or small. And as I travelled up and down, I was not to bid people *Good morrow* or *Good evening*: neither might I bow or scrape with my leg to any one.' This, he adds, 'made the sects and professions to rage,' as rage indeed they did. There was little wonder, for his voice was against the whole world of his day. He saw the evils of intemperance, and inveighed against public entertainments, 'where people got more drink than was good for them,' against wakes or feasts, May games, sports, plays, and shows

which trained up people to vanity and looseness, and led them from the fear of God. He was also moved to cry against all sorts of music and mountebanks playing tricks on their stages.

It is no wonder that this strange man, clad in leather, with a crowd following him here and there, and sometimes into a 'steeple house' to denounce the building and the priest, soon got himself into trouble with the authorities. It was after one of his testimonies in Nottingham in 1649, that a tumult arose; and, as he graphically if somewhat naïvely puts it, 'the officers came and took me away and put me into a nasty stinking prison; the smell thereof got so into my nose and throat that it annoyed me very much.' This was the first of the many imprisonments he was to endure for conscience' sake. His early life, indeed, was little else than a record of insults, persecutions, and imprisonments. His experiences of prisons were of the most dreadful kind, and this forced him early to draw public attention to evils against which John Howard's eloquent voice was afterwards to be raised. He may be said, therefore, to have commenced the crusade to which one of his own followers in after years was to devote the strength of her pure and loving heart.

It was after one of his arrests that he and his disciples received the name by which they have been most frequently known, which they bear to this day, and which, though they do not use it themselves, is now associated with them without any idea of reproach. Being taken before the Justices at Derby, strong in the excited consciousness of being the oracle of the Most High, he bade the authorities quake at the word



of the Lord. One of them, Gervase Bennett, an Independent, caught at the word and called him and his followers *Quakers*. To the world it seemed a happy designation. Sewell tells us 'that it so caught the public fancy and especially that of the priests, that they sounded it gladly abroad, never after that time giving any other name to the Professors of the Light, so that it soon ran over all England, and making no stand there, it quickly reached the neighbouring countries, and that English name sounding very oddly in the ears of foreigners hath given occasion to many silly stories.' No doubt Fox and his followers had very often their own indiscretion to thank for being so frequently in trouble. In such bad odour were they that when a rumour of a plot against the life of the Protector got abroad, suspicion fell upon Fox, and he was hurried up to London as a prisoner. Here he had his first interview with Cromwell, who though still undressed when Fox arrived at once received the Quaker, arrayed in his leather suit, hat on head, and with the salutation of 'Peace be to this house' on his lips. In answer to his inquiries he told Cromwell the reason of his quarrel with the ministers of religion, and went on to explain the doctrine of the illuminating spirit, without which even the Scriptures were useless. During the conversation the Protector frequently ejaculated 'it is good ; it is truth,' and on the Quaker's departure shook him warmly by the hand, saying with tears in his eyes, 'Come again to my house, for if thou and I were but an hour together, we should be nearer one another.'

As Fox's followers increased so did their zeal grow. It led many of them to take long journeys to spread

abroad the new gospel of the inward light, which they felt so precious to their own spiritual nature. Fox himself visited Scotland, but only to find the Lowlanders a 'dark carnal people,' who would not listen to his words, and the Highlanders so 'devilish' that they attacked him and his friends with pitchforks. But his converts travelled farther than he did. Quakers found their way to Holland, so much associated with the Independents and all who were persecuted for their religion at home, to the Holy Land, and Egypt, to China and Japan. Nor were women behind men in their missionary ardour. Hester Biddell penetrated into the presence of the great Monarch at Versailles, and ordered him to sheath his destroying sword. Mary Fisher, was the first Quakeress to visit America. She and others narrowly escaped death as witches. It might have been expected that the remembrance of the persecutions from which their sires or perchance they themselves had fled, should have led the American Puritans to tolerate if not to welcome the Quakers ; but, alas for human nature ! we find the new Colonists subjecting them to worse treatment than they had ever received at home. With thankfulness we can say that no Quaker was ever put to death in England for holding the views of his sect. But so much cannot be said for the New England States, where the warfare waged against them was very bitter, and where many paid the penalty of their convictions by a martyr's death. Notable among the many who thus suffered was Mary Dyar, who after being once reprieved, when she was on the scaffold, was a second time tried and finally executed. The record

of their persecutions in New England is one of horror. No indignities were too shameful, and no cruelties too great for them—cruelties continued even after a royal mandamus from England had forbidden them.

But if Quakers and other Nonconformists in England escaped the last penalty of the law, they yet suffered much persecution; and after the Restoration they were excluded from all toleration. Clarendon could see nothing in Protestant nonconformity but a compound 'of will and humour and folly and knavery and ambition and malice, which (he said) make men inseparably cling together till they have satisfaction in all their pretences, or till they are absolutely broken and subdued.' The rising of the Fifth Monarchy men gave the government an excuse for enforcing measures upon which they had already determined, and on the tenth of January 1661, a royal proclamation was issued which, while it only named Anabaptists, Quakers, and Fifth Monarchy men, really included Independents as well, and put an end to all public worship outside the parish church. 'It was in vain that Independents and Baptists declared their loyalty to the king and protested against the Fifth Monarchy insurrection as a 'horrid rebellion;' in vain that the Quakers addressed the king desiring that he and his council might live for ever in the fear of God, and praying that friends' meetings might not be broken up, and that four hundred of their number imprisoned in London might be released.' This act was followed by others which only made the position of all Nonconformists more intolerable. The story of their persecution in England and Scotland alike

is the blackest page in the history of the Restoration government, a page which no ingenuity of argument can ever wash white.<sup>1</sup> Thousands suffered in darkness and in silence whose very names have been lost. But in this as in all other cases, the sufferings of the good have been the seed of the principles for which they suffered. The names of the two Churches of which we write will ever be associated in this righteous warfare. 'At the Restoration,' says Mr. Green, 'religious freedom seemed again to have been lost. Only the Independents and a few despised sects, such as the Quakers, upheld the right of every man to worship God according to the bidding of his conscience.' They endured but they conquered. They triumphed because—as Howe said in reply to Dr. Gilbert Burnet, who expressed his conviction that after Baxter, Bates, and Howe himself were once laid in their graves, their cause would die of itself,—'Their existence depended much more on principles than on persons.' The very means taken for their suppression gave them vitality and strength. Their leaders were greater outside, than they could ever have been inside, the Church, and the Independents of the present time can look back with justifiable pride to the men who in those dark days 'adorned their adversity and made even their sudden obscurity illustrious.' They have been well enumerated and described by Principal Fairbairn: 'John Owen, late Vice-Chancellor of Oxford, massive, erudite, the ideal of the scholastic

<sup>1</sup> By the passing of the Act of Conformity, two thousand ministers were ejected from their homes and livings. It was in commemoration of their heroism and fidelity that the Congregationalists in 1875 opened the Memorial Hall and Library in London on the site of the old Fleet Street Prison.

theologian, building up with patient skill his loved science, and fencing it round with the sort of arguments his age understood ; Thomas Goodwin, less varied, but more subtle, not so broad but quite as analytic as Owen, dealing with rich delight on the dialectical subtleties that pleased his age ; John Howe with a soul above the narrowness and bitterness of his day, serene in the midst of his troubles, living in sublime contemplation of 'The Living Temple' or 'The Vision of God ;' Joseph Caryl and William Greenhill, quaint expositors, rich in the lore then used to explain the Old Testament ; Theophilus Gale, the equal of Cudworth in his knowledge of the ancient world, full of the great and fruitful idea he has embodied in his *Court of the Gentiles* ; these were some of the ejected from Church or University, and they may help to show the quality of the men who were now, because of their Independency, outcasts from the Church of England, and for it deprived of their common rights as citizens.'

The Society of Friends also is not without its great names, though the majority of its early members came from the ranks of the humble and unintellectual. Among those who joined Fox, William Penn is perhaps the most conspicuous figure. His conversion to Quakerism, considering his social position and surroundings, was as striking as his subsequent career was romantic. His *No Cross, no Crown*—the means of the conversion of Stephen Grellet, the famous French Quaker—is a noble addition to the famous books which have been written during terms of imprisonment. There is also Robert Barclay, who had tried both Calvinism and Catholicism, but finding in both an absence of 'the principles of love, and the

presence of 'a straitness of doctrine,' and 'a practice of persecution'—sought his ideal of the Christian life in the new sect of which he was to become the learned apologist, and to the exposition of whose doctrines he brought both logical ability and accurate scholarship. 'In his *Apology for the True Christian Divinity* published in 1675, he reduced,' says Dr. Cunningham, 'a very unpromising heap of materials into a logical system, which he states with perspicuity, illustrates with taste, and supports with quotations from the Apostles, fathers, and reformers of the Church.'<sup>1</sup> Barclay's *Apology* is, in some respects, really a great work, which will still repay perusal; and of Barclay himself Dr. Hunt hardly speaks in terms of exaggeration when he says<sup>2</sup>: 'Jewell may have more learning, Hooker more philosophy, but of all the representative advocates of religious parties, Barclay is least afraid of pursuing his arguments to their ultimate results, and of accepting what he believes, with all the legitimate consequences.'

It is not very easy to grasp the precise difference between the position of the Society of Friends and that of other orthodox bodies of Evangelical Christians in regard to the fundamental beliefs of our common faith—nor is it necessary here to do so. The difference in many cases is more spiritual than literal. The Epistle addressed by George Fox and others

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Cunningham's admirable volume is too little known: *The Quakers: from their Origin to the Present Time*: an International History, by John Cunningham, D.D., author of the *Church History of Scotland*, etc. Edinburgh: John Menzies and Co. 1868.

<sup>2</sup> *Religious Thought in England, from the Reformation to the end of last Century*: a contribution to the History of Theology, by the Rev. John Hunt, M.A. Strahan and Co., 56 Ludgate Hill, London.

to the Governor of Barbadoes in 1671, and which stands first in the doctrinal section of the recently published *Book of Christian Discipline of the Society of Friends in Great Britain* might be taken for a copious and somewhat turgid paraphrase of the Apostles' Creed, in which great prominence is given to the internal work of Christ. Even in regard to the doctrine of the Trinity, which it is asserted the early Friends did not hold in the sense in which it has commonly been received, the point of departure, if indeed there is any, is vague and shadowy. As is to be expected from their objection to precise definition, they shrank from formulating into a doctrinal dogma their views as to 'the three that bear record in heaven,' and preferred to confine themselves to the simple language of Scripture on this as on other subjects. They gave, of course, great prominence to the work of the Holy Spirit, which readily became identified with the Spirit's action in the heart and the doctrine of the Inward Light. This doctrine, as Penn puts it, is the great foundation and corner-stone of the Society. Every man coming into the world is endowed with an inward principle by which he is enabled to distinguish between good and evil, and to correct the disorderly passions and corruptions of his nature, 'without which spirit inwardly revealed, man can do nothing to the glory of God or to effect his own salvation.' Fox cared little to analyse this inward principle or 'light.' He preached it as a dogma, without explanation—but so soon as his followers began to reason about it, there arose serious difference of opinion. Hicks, who led the great schism by which the Society in America was rent in twain, at the

beginning of this century, though implying that it was nothing but our innate ideas of right and wrong, by obedience to which heathen as well as Christian could be saved, yet identified it with Christ in the heart, to whose teaching even Holy Scripture was to be subordinated. The views of the Hicksites came to be tantamount to a denial of the historical Christ, and had the effect of making the Friends at home more strictly orthodox, and of giving rise to a sect called Beaconites, from a book entitled *A Beacon to the Society of Friends*, written by Isaac Crewdson of Manchester, in which the Scriptures were set above the teaching of this Inward Light. This further heresy was the means of bringing Joseph John Gurney to the front, Mrs. Fry's brother, a Quaker of Quakers both by birth and zeal. It was he, we may mention, who made a convert of Mrs. Opie the novelist. He tried to settle this old question as to how far the Inward Light was the work of the Holy Spirit, and how far the mere imagination of the human heart. In doing so he did not, however, get beyond the position of Allan, a well-known Friend much identified with the progress of education, and zealous of good works, in his reply to the Duchess de Broglie, when she asked, 'How are we to distinguish between the divine influence and the working of our own imagination?' The difference, he answered, would be revealed to those who resigned themselves to God's will, and waited upon Him in prayer. In like manner, Gurney says, 'My only course is to go to my Lord with the question, "Is it of myself or is it of Thee?" or in other words, "Is it wrong or is it right?" the two questions being per-



fectly equivalent.' This of course only relegates the difficulty a step further back, but it is probably all the answer that can be given to this and kindred questions. It did not meet Crewdson's difficulties, and he seceded along with his followers from the Society. These two heresies had the effect of making the Society pay more deference to the authority of Holy Scripture and yet define as far as they could the character of the Inward Light.

However this mystical doctrine of the 'Internal Light' may be defined, it is this which differentiates the Quaker conception of Christianity. Religion is with them purely spiritual, an inward feeling radiating life and governing all its movements, rather than any form of dogma, tradition, or ritualism. The Holy Spirit moving the heart is the guide of all worship and conduct. From such a central conception of Religion there follows naturally a depreciation of the Church as an external organisation, and even such outward means of grace as the sacraments. The Society of Friends has its own order of government, and, so to speak, its own ritual—no religious society could well exist without them; but the Church as a substantive organism clothed with divine authority is unknown to them; they have no specially ordained clergy; and they find their spiritual nourishment and growth in grace, not in any historical ritual or ordinances, but simply in 'meetings' for mutual edification and waiting upon the Lord. In their worship they have no stated prayer and no singing. The Scriptures are not read. They attach no special sanctity to the place in which they meet, and still enter it with their hats on. I lately had the privilege

of worshipping with them in Bradford, in Yorkshire. The preacher, I was informed, was an Ex-Mayor of Birmingham. He repeated the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican, and spoke some earnest words from it. There were long intervals of silence between the prayers and other utterances that the Friends were moved to give, making one think of the sacred silence in which the Communion elements in our own Church are handed round during the dispensation of the Lord's Supper. The frequency and length of these pauses, however, reminded one of the not unnatural request of the Russian Emperor, Alexander, with whom the sect found such favour, when he asked Allan, 'Now I want you to tell me a little how you do in public worship; for I find that without some words or something to fix my mind upon, I am apt to wander; I find it difficult to fix my thoughts—how is it with you?' Allan had to confess that he had often to contend with the same tendency, but that the only way was to keep a watch over the thoughts, and so often as they wandered to bring them back again. The preacher and some other members of their ministry along with their Elders occupy a long raised gallery in front of the division of the church in which the men sit. The women sit on the other side—some occupying seats on the raised dais alongside of the men. From its earliest days the Society has, so far as it recognises a ministry at all, recognised the ministry of women, and a woman or man may speak from any part of the congregation.

Simple and unorganised as was their first association—informal meetings of men and women seeking

after holiness of heart and life—the Society ere long found it necessary to have certain office-bearers ; and gradually they came to recognise ministers, elders, and overseers. Those Friends are accepted as ministers who had given proof that they had a gift for preaching, but they receive no payment for their services. The Elders must be ‘discreet and judicious.’ It is their duty ‘tenderly to encourage and help young ministers and advise others as they in the wisdom of God see occasion.’ Besides these there are generally two men and two women in each congregation intrusted with its affairs. They are called ‘Overseers,’ and are to be of upright and unblameable conversation. The meetings for ‘Discipline,’ which is the term used by them for all the arrangements and regulations for the civil and religious benefit of a Christian Church, were commenced as early as 1653, and were originally designed for the ‘promotion of charity and piety’—a phrase which in the words of one of their tracts embraces ‘the relief of the poor, the maintenance of good order, the support of the testimonies which we believe it is our duty to bear to the world, and the help and recovery of such as are overtaken in faults.’ In the troublous times of persecution and suffering there would no doubt be much need for these meetings. Now they are chiefly necessary for the proper conduct and order of the Society. They may be said to be four in number. The preparative meeting is generally held after worship, in which representatives are chosen and business prepared for the monthly meeting where the chief business of the Society is transacted, its funds and property managed, new members admitted, resignations accepted, marriages

authorised, registers of births, marriages, and deaths kept, elders and overseers appointed, offences doctrinal or moral inquired into, and private disputes adjusted, it having been for long the judgment of the Society that its members should not sue each other at law. Representatives from several monthly meetings in one or two counties compose a quarterly meeting. In it answers to certain questions regarding the conduct of members, and the accounts received from the monthly meetings, are prepared for the yearly meeting, which has the general superintendence of the affairs of the Society, and maintains a brotherly correspondence with the yearly meetings of other countries. Women hold similar meetings, but have no power to frame rules. Sometimes men and women meet together, and when they do so it is called 'opening the shutters.' There is also a 'morning meeting' held previous to the annual meeting, at which the manuscripts and books of the Society are revised. What is called the Meeting for Sufferings—the name is significant of its origin—is now considered as a standing Committee of the yearly meeting, with a general care over any matters requiring immediate attention, such as any petition or application to government. In none of these meetings is there a President, it being believed that divine wisdom alone ought to preside; but the clerk generally discharges the duties that devolve upon that office.

In manners and customs the Friends for long were recognised as a 'peculiar people,' who kept themselves aloof from 'the world,' and specially from its supposed gaiety and amusement,—distinguished

wherever they went by a simple, grave, and sober demeanour. They did not sing nor dance, nor play cards. The well-known and easily recognised broad brim and poke bonnet, the drab-coloured garments, unornamented save perhaps by shining buttons, for which some of them had a weakness, were never seen at theatre nor race-course. Even to have a too great nicety for flowers and gardens, to care for the fine arts, to be given to the fashionable using of tea, to the taking of snuff, and the smoking of tobacco, was wont to be a sign of carnality in the eyes of the Society, which exercised so minute a jurisdiction over its members, that Barclay in his *Inner Life of the Religious Societies of the Commonwealth*,<sup>1</sup> does not appear to exaggerate, when he says that the whole life of man from the cradle to the grave was ordered. All their usages were in the direction of extreme simplicity and even of rigid austerity. Of late years a vast change has come over the body as far as these strict practices are concerned, and there is not much now to distinguish the Quakers either in their appearance or in their habits. But if they no longer emphasise their testimony as they were wont to do—if the quaint dress and simple habit have to a great extent disappeared—their unwearied and beneficent labours—the outcome of kind hearts and active brains—still live, and the humane and pure character of our civilisation to-day is owing not a little to the influence which has been exerted on it by members

<sup>1</sup> *The Inner Life of the Religious Societies of the Commonwealth*: considered principally with reference to the influence of Church Organisation on the spread of Christianity. By Robert Barclay. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 27 Paternoster Row. 1876.

of this Society, whose zeal for good works still lives in many a noble institution and in many a much needed reform.

For it is as a body of Philanthropists that the members of the Society of Friends are perhaps best known. We have seen how George Fox drew notice to the state of the prisons in his day. John Howard<sup>1</sup> had since then given the devotion of a life to the cause of prison reform, but much remained to be done, when the attention of Elizabeth Fry was called to the subject, by Stephen Grellet and William Foster, well-known Friends, and along with her brother Joseph John Gurney and Elizabeth Pryor and others, she began a work which is a standing monument to the gentle omnipotence of woman's love, and the influence of which is still felt not only in this country but throughout the civilised world. The eloquent, forcible, and effective protest of the Friends against slavery is well known, and the history of its abolition cannot be separated from the labours of Fox and Penn and such Quakers as John Woolman and Anthony Benezet. They were the first Christian Church to lift up a testimony against this 'unrighteous gain of oppression,' to make it a matter of censure for any of their number to keep slaves, and in 1773 to present the first petition to the House of Commons for its abolition. Their detestation of war is well known, and their efforts in the cause of peace have been both abundant and of long continuance. There are few pictures more touching than that which is presented by the interview which Joseph Sturge, Robert Charleton, and Henry Peace

<sup>1</sup> Howard was an Independent, a member of the Congregational Church at Bradford.

had with the Autocrat of all the Russias, when the nations were arming to the teeth. If many at home derided, there is little doubt that the Czar was touched by the simple and yet dignified address, and with the unaffected earnestness of those who brought it. The Crimean War was not averted, and the Friends had to content themselves with doing what they could for those who suffered through it, and after its close with successfully pleading for the admission of the principle of arbitration in regard to any future disputes which might arise. The Friends have also been much identified with the progress of education in England. The Ackworth Schools, founded in 1777, have always stood high, and the work of Joseph Lancaster and his adaptation of the Madras system of monitorial, or mutual instruction, as founded by Dr. Andrew Bell, is still remembered. They have never however attempted to provide anything like a College or University education for their youth, and in this they present a marked contrast to the Independents, who have always believed in the advantages of an educated ministry, and who, when access was denied to the Universities, at once set about founding Academies of their own, out of which the well-equipped and thoroughly organised Congregational Colleges of the present day have grown.

With not a few of the triumphs of modern civilisation the Friends have been prominently connected. They early recognised the 'rights of women.' Their views in regard to oaths have anticipated the recent tendency of legislation. The name of Penn will remain associated with the Freedom of the Jury. Thomas Shillitoe was a total abstainer, and rendered good

service to the cause of Temperance in days when it had not many advocates. William Allan and some other Friends, in 1797, when in Spitalfields people were starving, opened the first soup-kitchen of which we hear. At a time when men might be hanged for a trivial theft, he and others protested against punishment by death, and founded a society for diffusing information in regard to the subject. It was he also who established what he called 'Colonies at Home.' This was a scheme by which land was allotted on moderate terms to those who were in danger of becoming paupers. Fox had come to the conclusion that the neglect of the poor was a disgrace to Christendom, and had petitioned Parliament in regard to it. Amongst other suggestions he made was one for a government registration of employers requiring labour, and the workmen out of employment in every market town. His followers, true to his spirit, have always been careful of their poor, and a complete poor-law was framed in the yearly meeting of the Society in 1710, although its working cannot be said to have been a success.

In tracing the history and characteristics of the Society of Friends, we have been led somewhat to forget the Independents, whose rise and early progress we sketched at the outset. We saw that though in a minority at the Westminster Assembly, the spirit of the times was in their favour. The atmosphere of the Commonwealth was congenial to them. The powerful pen of Milton was wielded on their side. The great plea of the Areopagetica was virtually in their favour. Advocating the fullest liberty of opinion, and against every form of spiritual



despotism, they soon became numerous, wealthy, and popular. It was natural, therefore, that they should wish to organise their forces, formulate their views on some definite basis. They approached Cromwell on the subject, and shortly before his death obtained his somewhat reluctant consent to hold a general meeting of their body. They met in Synod on the 29th of September 1658 at the Savoy in the Strand, and a Committee, with Dr. John Owen at its head, was appointed to draw up a Confession of their Faith. It differed very little from that of the Westminster Assembly of Divines if we except the passages in regard to Presbyterian government, for which a declaration of their own ideas of Church order was naturally substituted. The fundamental theory was laid down that every particular congregation is self-governing, has the right to manage its own affairs, to call its minister, and settle all disputes in regard to doctrinal and other matters. No person or persons external to it have any right to interfere with its beliefs or government. It does not, however, appear that their leaders had at the time realised to their full extent the principles which they were ultimately to adopt. It is evident from the declaration prepared by Owen, and presented on behalf of the Synod by Thomas Goodwin to Richard Cromwell, that they still regarded the chief magistrate as the secular head of the Church; and after Cromwell's abdication, we find them passing a resolution in which they deprecate any confidence reposed in the hands of the Quakers, 'they being persons of such principles as are destructive to the gospel, and inconsistent with the peace of civil societies.' In the

persecutions which they were to endure under the Restoration government, they however became more jealous of any authority of the state, and more tolerant of those who were involved in the same troubles.

The sufferings of the Nonconformists continued during long and weary years, until the Revolution brought relief. The Act of Toleration, by which under certain conditions Dissenters from the Church of England having their places of Assembly registered were allowed, and protected in their public worship, was passed in 1689. It required them to take the oath of allegiance, to declare their abhorrence of the pretended Papal power, and to subscribe with some exceptions the Thirty-nine Articles. By this Act the Quakers were in addition required to declare 'their firm belief of the doctrines of the Trinity, and that the Holy Scriptures are of divine inspiration.' Shortly after the passing of this Act we find the Dissenting churches, as represented by the Presbyterians, the Baptists, and the Independents drawing nearer to each other, and effecting unions with the view of making Nonconformity a greater power in the State. During subsequent years, while Presbyterians and Baptists in England declined both in members and in influence, the Independents as a body steadily rose in numbers and importance, and are now at the head of Protestant Nonconformity in England. It is calculated that there are at present upwards of 4000 Congregational churches in England and Wales, and nearly the same number in America. In Scotland there are 101 churches. Independency had of course found its way into Scotland during the time of the Commonwealth, but the present Congrega-

tional churches owe their origin chiefly to the missionary movement led by the Haldanes and others at the close of last century.

Besides the leaders we have already mentioned, the Independents can boast of some names of which any Church might be proud. The hymns of Isaac Watts, the commentary of Matthew Henry, the works of Philip Doddridge, belong by adoption to all our Churches, and have exercised no inconsiderable influence on religious life and feeling. Edward Williams and Pye Smith have left their mark on the theology and scholarship of the day. Our religious literature and religious character are the richer for the lives and labours of men like Burder, Harris, Henry Rogers, Angell James, the Vaughans, Dr. Halley and Thomas Binney; while men like Dr. Allon, Dr. Lindsay Alexander, Dr. Stoughton, and Principal Fairbairn to-day uphold the dignity of the Church which they adorn, and by the vigour of their thought and the earnestness with which they hold the convictions of their party testify to the vitality which still exists in Independency as a religious system.

The name Congregational has gradually taken the place of the older designation Independent, but both names are significant. The name Independent marks the protest of the churches assuming it against the authority of 'pope, prelate, presbytery, prince, or parliament,' and emphasises the position of such churches as differ from the National churches—Presbyterian or Episcopalian. The name Congregational is used to indicate more clearly the brotherhood and fellowship maintained in their separate communities, the spiritual equality of each member, the right and duty of all in the church to have a voice

in its deliberations, the essential necessity for each society to originate its own outward forms of life. The name Independent has seemed to savour too much of non-catholicity, and is thus not so much in favour with the Congregationalists of recent times whose aim has been to show that their principles are in no wise opposed to co-operation, and that their various congregations can be united for many admirable and necessary purposes without the independency of an individual church being destroyed. For such purposes of co-operation a Congregational Union has existed since the year 1833 : Its fundamental principle was thus re-asserted in 1871 : 'The Union recognises the right of every individual church to administer its affairs free from external control, and shall not in any case assume legislative authority or become a court of appeal.' Its objects are 'to uphold and extend evangelical religion primarily in connection with the churches of the Congregational order, to promote scriptural views of church fellowship and organisation ; to strengthen the fraternal relations of the Congregational churches, and to facilitate co-operation in everything affecting their common interests ; to maintain correspondence with the Congregational churches and other Christian communities throughout the world ; to obtain statistics relating to Congregational churches at home and abroad ; to assist in procuring perfect religious equality for all British subjects, and in promoting reforms bearing on their moral and social condition.' In thus recognising that each congregation, though complete in itself, is related in the way of friendly counsel and co-operation with other churches of the

same faith and order, the English Congregational Church has just followed the precedent of the Independent Church in the United States, which at an early date and from the necessities of its position had to adopt the same principle. The Congregational Church in Scotland had instituted its Union in 1812 chiefly as an aid to poor churches and Home-mission society, and was careful to assert that it was not in any sense an ecclesiastical court or co-operation with authority over the churches associated with it.

It is evident that Congregationalism, along with Presbyterianism, belongs to the Republican form of Church government in distinction to the monarchical, as represented by the Papacy and in a limited sense by Episcopacy; but that it differs from the presbyterial form by being democratic rather than oligarchical. The one is more or less governed by its elect, the other acts in a body and as a whole. Each Independent congregation has the power to call and to dismiss its own minister. He is ordained by the neighbouring clergy, unless anything can be brought against him showing he is unfit for the office of the ministry. In regard to the choice of a minister, the office-bearers, elders, and deacons, chosen by the congregation, often consult the neighbouring ministers and the leaders of their body. Questions in regard to doctrine do not often arise. While in effect the Congregationalists hold the doctrines of the Reformation, as formulated in the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Thirty-nine Articles, they do not require subscription to any Confession. As in government, they recognise no authority 'saving that only of the Supreme and Divine Head of the Church, the Lord Jesus Christ,' so in doctrine they appeal to Holy

Scripture as their only standard. The dogmatic teaching of each generation is worthy of all respect, but is in no way binding or authoritative. A liberal but earnest evangelicism may be said to be the prevailing characteristic of their own teaching.

Taken all in all, both Churches have had a history of which they may be proud, and for which Christendom is the richer. The Congregationalists of to-day can remember with justifiable pride that it was upon the conception of a Church such as theirs that Locke based his famous plea for toleration. They can recall the fact that in days when Priest and Presbyter were contending who should set up the most powerful and most overbearing spiritual despotism, their ancestors raised aloft the standard of religious liberty, and did not flinch under trials the most severe, to assert that a man's conscience is in the keeping neither of minister nor magistrate, that the spiritual priesthood of devout men and women, seeking to do the will of God, is the essential priesthood, and must be allowed to work out its own ideals, under no authority but that of the divine Founder of the Church. They may justifiably think that but for them, in an age of faction and passion, the smouldering fires of religious earnestness would not have been fanned into flame, and indeed in some quarters might have died out altogether. The Society of Friends may rejoice that they have had a share in many of these triumphs, while they can point to the noble testimony they have rendered, on behalf of the idea of the essentially spiritual nature of worship, that the external form is as nothing to the internal, animating, informing, and elevating it ; that every heart that is prepared by prayer and

faith, by aspiration after its highest ideals, and by an honest attempt to live up to the knowledge that has been vouchsafed to it, becomes the home of the Holy Spirit, and luminous with a ray of the divine light that lighteneth every man that cometh into the world. They may proudly recall the sufferings that have been endured by them in their protest against Priestcraft and Bibliolatry, and their efforts after a simpler faith, a more real devotion, purer manners, and more earnest lives. They can point to the many philanthropic movements they have inaugurated, the many benevolent designs they have furthered, the fetters which they have helped to strike off the slave, and the exertions they have made to hasten the time when 'all men's good' shall

' Be each man's rule, and universal Peace  
Lie like a shaft of light across the land,  
And like a lane of beams athwart the sea,  
Through all the circle of the golden year.'

When George Fox lay dying, he said, 'The power of the Lord is above all sickness and death. The seed reigns, blessed be the name of the Lord.' As we think of the history of both of these Christian Societies, we can adopt his words and say: 'The power of the Lord is above all persecution and trial.' Wherever there is the germ of genuine religious conviction, of earnest faith, of a holy life and a helpful endeavour after a good beyond itself, there it reigns and is fruitful. For the seed sown and watered, and brought to maturity, by the blood of many a persecuted, but bravely enduring Independent, by many a long-suffering and meekly bearing 'Friend,' Christendom may to-day say—Blessed be the name of the Lord.



# ST. GILES' LECTURES.

*FOURTH SERIES—THE CHURCHES OF CHRISTENDOM.*

## *LECTURE XI.*

### THE METHODIST CHURCH.

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THE Methodist Church is of very humble and very recent origin. It has no long eventful history carrying us back to the remote past, no stirring associations with national life, no relics of antiquity, no sacred buildings hallowed by the memories of centuries. On the contrary, it is an entirely modern institution. Its position as a Church can hardly be said to have any clearly defined beginning, for it was the result not of secession but of a slow and steady development. It has arisen simply and naturally from a mere religious society within the English Church, till it is now, as it has long been, a distinct ecclesiastical community embracing among its adherents many millions of souls and extending its influence throughout the whole world. The extravagances that have come in its train are



such as are apt to repel the thoughtful mind, and have been the food for satire to witty critics through every period of its history. But its claims upon our attention and regard are very high. Its organisation, its doctrine and its influence, are among the most interesting facts in the Church history of recent times. It has produced many works of Christian benevolence, it has diffused a new spirit of earnestness, and the influence which it has exerted on the religious life of England has been so marked and powerful that no historian can venture to ignore, however much he may depreciate it. As a Church it is but of yesterday ; a century and a half comprise its entire history ; its progress has been simply marvellous.

Methodism did not take its rise from any doctrinal dispute nor from any question of church-government. It was from the very beginning a religious movement. Herein lay the secret of its strength. It had no sympathy with Dissent, it had no interest in mere ecclesiastical disputes. Its declared object was 'to reform the nation, more particularly the Church, and to spread scriptural holiness over the land.' The discovery which Methodism had made did not concern the validity of the Episcopal office nor even in the first instance the doctrines of the Church. It was simply the discovery once more of the value of the human soul and of its immediate personal relation to God. The force of this conception is sufficient to explain all its subsequent history and influence as well as all its evident shortcomings. For there is nothing which is more likely to lead to fantastic as well as glorious results than the keen consciousness

of spiritual realities which from the very first Methodism strove to inspire.

The Methodists preached no new doctrine ; their theology was very scant and very simple ; they knew little of the metaphysical subtleties of the creeds, and cared not to know. But there was one idea which was always present with them and which overshadowed all others, the idea of the worth of the individual soul and the need for personal holiness. This idea lies at the root of the Methodist movement, explains its origin, determines its progress, underlies all its organisation, and enswathes its entire history. There is certainly a vast difference between the old-fashioned Methodism of last century and the Methodism of to-day, just as there is a vast difference between the Presbyterianism of this century and the Presbyterianism of the eighteenth. The old-fashioned Methodism like the old fashioned Presbyterianism brought with it much that seems crude and ridiculous to modern eyes. A generation that has seen such rapid progress is apt to look with complacency on a generation that believed as the early Methodists did 'in present miracles, in instantaneous conversions, in revelations by dreams and visions, which also drew lots and sought for divine guidance by opening the Bible at haphazard.' Still it remains true that the inspiring idea of the Methodist societies at the present time is the same idea to which they owe their origin, and which they have done much to revive not only in the Church of England but in all the Churches of Christendom.

When Mr. Buckle, therefore, in his *History of Civilisation* described John Wesley as a great schis-

matic, whose aim was to found a system which should rival the Established Church, he was looking at the result of Wesley's labours and drawing an illogical inference—an inference which the facts do not justify. The system which Wesley founded is the Methodist Church. It certainly rivals the Establishment, but nothing was further from the intention of its Founder than to form a new sect. He was a loyal son of the Church of England, and he remained faithful to her till his death. The Church which claims him as its Founder has long been outside the Anglican Communion, but it began within her pale, and the separation was only gradual. It is now one of the great Churches, comprising many distinct bodies which though divided from each other are substantially identical, and trace their origin to one common source, the genius and the piety of John Wesley.


It is a remark of Matthew Arnold that John Wesley had a 'genius for godliness.' This is not only the key-note of Wesley's character, but also, as we have said, the secret of the Evangelical Revival of the eighteenth century and the true explanation of the rise of the Methodist Church. When the second George was on the throne of England, religious life had sunk to a very low ebb. It was truly, as Carlyle describes it, 'an age of spiritual paralysis,' 'a godless world.' The ignorance of the lower classes was almost equalled by the ignorance of the lower clergy. There was no hope in the Church, for the Church was asleep, and when she did awake it was only to apologise in the mildest of tones for her loosely held belief. Neither was there any hope in Dissent, for Dissent had spent its force, and was languid and

powerless. Something like despair began to fall on the minds of serious and devout men ; the prevailing tone was sceptical ; a cynical rationalism pervaded even the apologetic literature of the day ; Arianism was openly avowed ; Socinianism became rampant ; scepticism was everywhere supreme. The natural results in life and conduct were to be expected, and the historians of Methodism have drawn a very sombre picture of the state of religion in England. But the rectory at Epworth, the home of the Wesleys, is itself a proof that some deduction must be made.

Like a later movement in the Anglican Church, Methodism is sometimes regarded as an Oxford movement. It is commonly traced back in the history of its founder to his experiences at Oxford, where undoubtedly the idea of the Methodist societies is to be found. When John Wesley returned to the University in 1729, after having acted for some time as curate to his father, he found that his brother Charles had formed a small religious society of which he at once became the head and moving spirit. The peculiarities of this society, embracing as they did regular attendance at communion, fasting, stated hours for devotion and visitation of the sick, naturally made it an object of ridicule to their quick-witted and not too pious fellow-students, who nicknamed them 'the Holy Club,' 'the Sacramentarians,' and finally 'the Methodists.' The nickname was appropriate, for they reduced all their religious duties to rule, 'they interrogated themselves whether they had been simple and collected, whether they had prayed with fervour Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, and on Saturday noon ; if they had used a collect at nine, twelve, and three o'clock ; duly

meditated on Sunday from three to four on Thomas à Kempis ; or mused on Wednesday and Friday from twelve to one on the Passion.' But this little society, which was really nothing more than a college set, had no direct or immediate bearing on the Methodist movement. It came to nothing. It never at any time numbered more than thirty adherents, and all of these took different directions—some of them developing into strict High Churchmen, others passing over into Dissent. If it is remarkable for anything it is for this, that through its means there were brought together the two men who by the variety of their gifts, the one by his commanding eloquence, the other by his administrative capacity, effected the great religious revolution of modern times. Already George Whitefield had experienced the baptism of fire, 'the daystar had arisen in his heart,' and he was burning to deliver his message. With what power and with what result he delivered that message, you have already been told by a previous Lecturer. It is with John Wesley rather than with Whitefield that the story of Methodism as a Church is bound up.

Setting aside then the Oxford Methodism as having no direct connection with the movement, except that it had its influence on Wesley's mind and indicates his prevailing characteristic, we find two very clearly-marked periods in the history of the Methodist Church. The first is the period during the lifetime of the founder after his conversion, when it is as yet nothing but an association of Religious Societies, though all the elements of a complete organisation are present. The second is the period after the death of Wesley, during which it has gradually con-



solidated into a distinct and fully equipped Church. The first of these periods has been described as the period of Evangelical Methodism, the second may be called the period of Ecclesiastical Methodism. The first period of half a century centres in the personal history of Wesley; the second has seen the complete development of his principles and the triumph of his system.

I. After the little society at Oxford had broken up Wesley went to Georgia, but his mission was unsuccessful, and he returned to London in 1738. It was at this time that the crisis occurred in his spiritual experience which had such a mighty influence on his subsequent career. On his return from Georgia, his mental condition as he himself described it was one of complete entanglement and confusion. He was disappointed and miserable, and probably inclined (as he afterwards thought) to exaggerate, but there can be no doubt of the reality of his mental perplexity. He had become confused amid opposing schools of theology. He had read the Lutherans and the Calvinists, and vainly sought an antidote for both in the contradictions of Anglican divines. In despair he had betaken himself to the Fathers, but 'bent the bow too far the other way.' It was in these circumstances that he came under the influence of Peter Böhler, an earnest German, and a member of the Moravian Brotherhood, who gravely warned him against his own philosophy, and explained to him the true nature of faith. To Wesley the conversation of Böhler seems to have had all the freshness of a revelation, though he did his best to combat him. It prepared the way for an event which must be regarded by all

unprejudiced students as the true beginning of the Methodist Church. The date is the 24th of May 1738, and the story is told by Wesley himself all unconscious of its issues. Oppressed by his doubts and entanglements he was looking everywhere for a sign that would set him at rest. In the morning he opened his New Testament, and fancied he found a special message for himself in the words on which his eyes rested, 'There are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises.' As he went out he opened again at the words, 'Thou art not far from the kingdom of God.' In the evening he went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate Street, where in the fading twilight he heard one reading 'Luther's Preface to the Epistle to the Romans.' The words of the great Reformer sank into his soul, and a new Reformer was born, 'the meek May twilight was deepening into night, but the dawn of the great revival shone in John Wesley's heart.'

It was this experience which made John Wesley a preacher, which was the true beginning of Methodism. It began in the soul of its founder, and was wrought out there before it became a fact of history. The desire to make known to others what he had himself experienced, changed the polished and exact Oxford student into a powerful preacher of the gospel, and 'the common people heard him gladly.' He responded to the appeal of Whitefield, who had already begun his field-preaching, and was electrifying peasant and peer with his impassioned eloquence. It was with difficulty that he could reconcile himself to the irregular mission, but his scruples were soon melted away in the fervour of his religious zeal. He

felt that his work had come, he knew that he had a message to deliver, he did not dare to be silent. And so wherever opportunity offered in open field or thronged highway he began to lift up his voice. The burden of his preaching was the doctrine, then called 'new,' of salvation by faith, and the success which from the first attended him was very great. Lacking the fiery oratory of Whitefield, he had the same earnestness, the same profound conviction of the reality of his message, and he had also a rare practical sagacity much more valuable for attaining permanent results, he was 'a born administrator of spiritual forces.' Hence while Whitefield's fame is a lingering echo, the work of Wesley remains, and his name is in all the Churches. They who gave him the nickname builded better than they knew, for the 'Founder' of Methodism was above all things a Methodist.

It has been said that Wesley had no preconceived plan, and in a certain sense this is true, but he was not merely the creature of circumstances, he was determined by one clear purpose: 'Church or no Church, we must save as many sinners as we can.' To this end everything was directed. The defects of the Church system were speedily recognised: no attempt had been made to insure systematic religious instruction. To remedy this he adopted an idea which was naturally suggested to him by the success of his preaching. In 1739 he tells us eight or nine persons came to him in London, who appeared to be deeply convinced of sin. They desired that he would spend some time with them and advise them. So he appointed a day when they might all come together. And this was the beginning of the 'United Societies,'



which have now grown into the Methodist Church. Other societies arose at Bristol, at Kingswood, at Newcastle, and in 1743 it became necessary to draw up rules for their guidance, another element having meanwhile been added by the division of the societies into classes, which have continued to be a special feature of the Methodist system. The document embodying these rules is still in force, and though it is unsectarian it cannot be doubted that it presents another sect 'in process of formation.' A religious society has begun, nominally within the Church of England, but having no organic connection, being constituted simply on the basis of mutual edification and growth in grace. Of this ever-growing Society Wesley, almost in spite of himself, became the director. He was supported by his brother Charles, whose hymns inspired the Methodists with deep spiritual feelings, and he was also joined by one or two clergymen of the Church, but the societies increased so rapidly as to tax all their powers. As far as they could they endeavoured personally to superintend them all, and when circumstances compelled them, even began to administer the sacraments—a step which it must in fairness be allowed was hastened by the shortsighted opposition of many of the parish ministers. Another step followed even more bold, the appointment of lay preachers. It was taken very unwillingly, but it soon became and has always remained a strong feature in Methodism. Wesley knew its dangers, and he endeavoured by every means in his power to guard against them. He held his first Conference in 1744, and subsequently adopted a doctrinal test for the admission of lay

preachers. From this time till his death the history of the movement is the history of rapid progress, and of the gradual widening of the breach between Methodism and the Church. In the year 1778, when he opened the New Chapel in City Road, London, Methodism was recognised as a great power in England. It was still within the Church, but the cords were loosening. Discontent was spreading because of the difficulty in respect to the administration of the sacraments, and the demand was made of Wesley to ordain the preachers. He paused, but necessity determined him, and yielding to the judgment of his friends, he set apart preachers first for America, next for Scotland, and finally for England; while in 1788, he 'provided that his presbyters' orders should be transmitted to his preachers,' having four years previously entered into Chancery the Deed of Declaration, the Magna Charta of Methodism, which legalised the Conference, gave his societies a permanent basis, and prepared for their subsequent development. The course of that development has not been what he desired, his life-long wish was to retain his societies within the Church of England, but he clearly foresaw the result which he vainly sought to avert, for he said, 'As soon as I am dead the Methodists will become a regular Presbyterian Church.'

II. What Wesley prophesied has practically come to pass. The restraint which his personality exercised ceased when that personality was withdrawn. He was not long dead when dissension broke out in the Methodist Societies. By the 'Plan of Pacification,' Conference gave power to the preachers in each

society to administer the sacraments, and the practice soon became general. But the demand for power to administer the sacraments was coupled with a demand which trenched on the powers of Conference, and sought to give a larger share to the laity in the administration and government of the Societies. This demand was steadily resisted, and every repetition of it led to a secession of greater or less dimension, till finally, in 1851, an attempt was made to 'starve the Conference into submission, and more than 100,000 members withdrew from its communion.' Since that time we are told, on high authority, peace and unity have remained unbroken. The main body has assumed the name, and claims to represent more nearly than the others the mind of the founder. It is by far the largest and most active of all the divisions of Methodism, numbering in England alone more than five hundred thousand members.

It would be an impossible task, within the limits of this lecture, to describe in anything like detail the different communities into which Methodism has crystallised. Fortunately, such a description is neither necessary nor desirable. Despite the apparent diversity in the various sections of the Methodist Church, there is a striking unity running through them all, and, indeed, to an onlooker (as is almost always found) the differences that divide them seem in most cases hardly perceptible. Practically, Methodism is one. The sole subject of division has been the question of church-government, but as this was not the basis on which the Societies were founded, or, rather, as it was no such question that determined their form, it has made little difference in the charac-

ter of the various bodies. The distinct characteristic of Methodism is neither its doctrine nor its form of government, though both of these are in a sense peculiar, but its method of religious discipline. It was essentially the complement of the English Reformation, which was in some respects lamentably defective. That Reformation was, in a large degree, a political movement, and did not touch the depths of religious experience. As a previous lecturer has said, it had 'no Martin Luther, no John Knox,' and all the more did it need its John Wesley. The impress of his master mind may be seen in the whole religious life of England, but it is distinctly visible in every form of Methodism, and more especially in that form which bears his name, and which claims, with justice, to be the parent stem of the great tree of Methodism whose branches spread throughout the whole world. In what I shall say, therefore, with regard to the doctrine and discipline of the Methodist Church, I shall confine myself with advantage to the system of Wesleyan Methodism, which is the typical form. But there are more than twenty communities which claim Wesley as their founder, all differing more or less widely from the main body. I can do no more than mention some of the more important.

The first breach in the ranks of Methodism was the *New Connection*, which came into existence seven years after the death of Wesley. It was founded in 1798 by Alexander Kilham, who was expelled from the Conference on the question of lay co-operation, and numbers about thirty thousand members. Secession once begun did not cease. The same democratic element underlay the movement of the *Protestant*

*Methodists*, who seceded ostensibly on the organ question in 1828, as well as that of the *Wesleyan Methodist Association* of 1836. Both of these, however, and also the seceders of 1850, were amalgamated in 1857, and are now known as the *United Methodist Free Churches*. The democratic element is impressed on the constitution, for Conference consists of circuit delegates, and circuits are independent of control by Conference. By far the largest body in England, however, next to the Wesleyan, is the *Primitive Methodist Connection*. It is strongest in the Midlands, the scene of its origin. It was founded by Hugh Bourne and William Clowes, local preachers, who were separated from the Wesleyan Methodist connection about 1810, because they had violated the rule laid down by Conference with regard to camp meetings. Primitive Methodism has certain peculiarities which betray its origin. Its constitution is more popular than that of Wesleyanism. It is more evangelical than ecclesiastical, and it allows women to preach. Its Conference is composed, in addition to twelve permanent members, of four members who are appointed by the preceding Conference, and of delegates from district meetings, the lay element predominating. This sect has a membership of about two hundred thousand, and stands in very close relation to the parent body. Not unlike the *Primitives*, both in character and spirit, are the *Bible Christians* or *Bryanites*, as they are sometimes called, who sprang up in Cornwall about the year 1815. They owe their origin to a Cornish local preacher, William O'Bryan or O'Brien, and are most numerous in the west and south of England. In all other

respects save the constitution of its Conference this sect is almost identical with the Primitive Methodists. In its supreme courts the ministerial and lay elements are balanced. Its Conference consists of ten superintendents of districts, the president and secretary of the preceding Conference, lay delegates from each district meeting, and as many of the travelling preachers as are allowed by their respective district meetings to attend. Its adherents, including those in Canada and in Australia, amount to more than thirty thousand.

Such are the main divisions of English Methodism, substantially at one in doctrine, and differing only on questions of church polity.

There is, however, another branch of Methodism which must be mentioned. Strictly speaking, it is no portion of the Methodist Church. It is no result of the labours of Wesley. It partakes of the same general character, but is widely divergent on the subject of doctrine. What is known as *Welsh Calvinistic Methodism* has generally been associated with the name of Whitefield, but in reality it had a distinct and independent origin. It began in 1735 under the preaching of Howell Harris, a native of Trevecca in Breconshire. His friends had sent him to Oxford to cure him of fanaticism, but the cure was not effectual. He had scarcely begun his preaching when another voice, that of Daniel Rowlands, was heard in Cardigan, and still another, that of Howell Davies, in Pembroke. It was not till three years later that Whitefield became connected with the movement. After his meeting with the great preacher, Harris continued his work and founded religious societies

throughout the principality in connection with the Church of England. Ere Wesleyan Methodism had begun to make itself felt the Welsh movement had made considerable progress. In 1742 it had already enlisted ten ministers and forty lay exhorters. Its first Association was held in 1742 under the Presidency of Whitefield, and thus for a time the Calvinistic Methodism of Wales was linked to that of England. After 1748, however, it seems to have lost any coherence that it ever had, but in 1791 it once more revived, and in 1811 it assumed the position of a church. Since that time it has made great progress, and its adherents number about one hundred and twenty thousand. In constitution it is nearer to the Presbyterian type than any of the Wesleyan bodies, as is shown by the fact that it is now known as the Welsh Presbyterians.

But Methodism is by no means confined to England. Of distinctly British origin, it is truly world wide in its expansion. It has made good the saying of Wesley, 'the world is my parish.' For it reckons its conquests on every shore. It boasts, and with some reason, of the apostolic zeal of its early preachers, which nothing short of the ends of the earth could stop. Even during the lifetime of Wesley it had made great progress in America, and indeed it was the progress there made which precipitated his collision with the authorities of the English Church. The close of the war and the formal declaration of peace in 1783 found the Methodists in America in a position of great numerical strength, but entirely dependent upon the American section of the English Church for the administration of the Sacraments. In response

to an appeal made to him Wesley ordained preachers for America, with Dr. Coke as superintendent, and thus was laid the foundation of the *Methodist Episcopal Church*, which claims to represent the mind of John Wesley more clearly and distinctly than any other organisation or communion on earth. Except in the form of Episcopacy, it differs in no important respect from the Methodism of England. It has discarded the liturgy, which was at first used, but it enforces articles of religion which however are only obligatory on the ministry. It has class meetings, circuits, and conferences; 'its bishops are not ordained to a diocese, but their duties are to preside over conferences, form districts, appoint ministers to travel over the country, to ordain bishops, elders, and deacons.' The Methodist Church in America is exactly one hundred years old, dating as it does from 1784. Since that time it has been extended and divided, partly by practical arrangement and partly by schism, till the number of divisions in Canada and the United States, episcopal and non-episcopal, is reckoned at eighteen. These Churches have a membership of nearly five millions, and represent a population of perhaps three times that number. I need only add that the Episcopal Methodists of America, according to Dr. Rigg, constitute to-day the largest aggregate of Protestant communicants and worshippers of the same ecclesiastical name to be found in any one nation in the world. Such in brief outline is the story of the Methodist Church and its divisions. It remains for me to describe to you the leading features of its doctrine and constitution, and for the sake of clearness I shall, as I have said, confine myself



to the Wesleyan community, merely referring to the salient points of difference between it and the other bodies. In the matter of church-government the Methodist Churches are widely separated, but they all follow the common type of religious discipline, while in doctrine, with one exception already referred to, they are practically uniform.

From the first the creed of Methodism was very simple, and contained nothing that was absolutely new. Its central thought was the apostolic precept, 'Repent and believe.' To an age that had forgotten them Methodism proclaimed once more the central truths of the Faith. With unwonted earnestness which often, it must be confessed, degenerated into fanaticism, the Methodist preachers declared the infinite value of the soul. This was the secret of their strength, the source of their influence. It came on men like an inspiration: it roused them from spiritual slumber; it kindled a divine enthusiasm. It is the only key to the Methodist revival. No theory of disease or fanaticism, still less of lunacy, can ever explain the wonderful effects of the early Methodism, nor the far-reaching influence which it has since exerted and the hold which it has retained not only on a large section of the people of England, but on millions of the English-speaking people in all parts of the globe. It is only a prejudiced humorist who will say that the cause of the spread of Methodism is the cause which has given birth to fanaticism in all ages—the facility of mingling human errors with the fundamental truths of religion. Errors there most undoubtedly were, but these were to be expected. Methodism succeeded because of the truth and in

spite of the error which it contained. And that truth was the central truth of the Faith. It proclaimed as a fact what the divines of the age were defending as a possibility: it was, in short, as Chalmers afterwards said, 'Christianity in earnest.'

Simple as was the early creed of Methodism, the theological system with which it is now identified is no less complicated and dogmatic than that of any of the Churches, although it has never drawn up a formal Confession of Faith. It is perhaps indeed a direct result of the history of Methodism, that its type of doctrine should be very decided, and yet that it should have no express creed or Articles of Faith. As we have seen, it did not take its origin in any doctrinal dispute, and consequently it was not founded on any novel theological basis. From the very beginning it was a personal and practical movement. It claimed to be the 'old religion,' 'the religion of the primitive Church,' 'the religion of the Church of England.' Wesley himself declared that he believed and taught only the doctrines of the Church of England, and when he was asked in his later years in what respect he differed from the Anglican Church, he said, 'To the best of my knowledge in none. The doctrines we preach are the doctrines of the English Church, indeed the fundamental doctrines of the Church clearly laid down both in her prayers, articles, and homilies.' But it may well be doubted if Wesley was the best judge of his own orthodoxy. He had early anticipated the famous canon of Neander, '*pectus facit Theologum.*' He had early declared that orthodoxy or right opinion is at best but a very slender part of religion if it can be allowed to be any part of

it at all. In theology he was a notorious eclectic, and gloried in his eclecticism. From Lutheran and Calvinist, from Presbyterian and Anglican, from Moravian and Romanist, from Ancient Father and Modern Commentator, he sought 'to separate a pure and genuine divinity,' and to 'leave the huge mingled mass of baser mixtures to their own obscurity.' What he held he held strongly, but he strove to be tolerant, to make little of points of difference, to make much of points of agreement. One occasion, after enumerating the points of difference between Churchmen and Dissenters, he dismissed them, in characteristic fashion, with the words, 'Let these stand by ; my only question at present is this—Is thine heart right ?' Indeed he was more of a religious reformer than a theologian, and the growing conviction with regard to his character is that which his friend Alexander Knox has recorded, that the main, fundamental, overpowering principle of his life was 'not the promotion of any particular dogma, or any particular doctrine, but the elevation of the whole Christian world in the great principles of Christian holiness and morality.' 'Let us keep to this,' he said, 'leaving a thousand disputable points to those that have no better business than to toss the ball of controversy to and fro ; let us keep close to one point, let us bear a faithful testimony in our several stations against all ungodliness and unrighteousness, and with all our might recommend that inward and outward holiness, without "which no man can see the Lord."' How many bitter controversies which have left their stain on Christian history might have been saved had these principles always prevailed. But not even

among his own followers has the spirit which animated Wesley been retained in all its original strength. There is, it is true, no rigid creed imposed upon the adherents of Methodism. Some of the sects, which from time to time have broken off from the main body, have attempted to formulate their doctrinal position. But with the main body of the Methodist Church, it remains true that it has no distinct articles of faith. It must not however be supposed that Methodism is careless of dogmatic precision. Far from it. What Wesley claimed is still generally speaking quite applicable to the theology of Methodism, and especially of Wesleyan Methodism. It adheres in the main to the catholic doctrine of the Church, accepting the 'Three Creeds' and even using the Apostolic and the Nicene in its Liturgy, while it receives without reserve what is distinctly doctrinal in the so-called Athanasian Creed. Thus on the fundamental doctrine of the Trinity it is in perfect harmony with the ancient faith of the Church. It is equally so with regard to the fall of man and the doctrine of original sin. But when it approaches the question of the relation of the human race to redemption it begins to diverge from catholic doctrine and to assume the Arminian type. It claims to preach a present free and full salvation, declining its assent to the doctrines of fore-ordination, necessity, and irresistibility, affirming final apostasy, entire sanctification, and the witness of the Spirit. If then it is said that the doctrine of the Thirty-nine Articles is the doctrine of Methodism, we must receive the statement with some reserve. They have never been formally accepted, and many of them are expressly repudiated

even by Wesleyans, while other Methodist bodies have separated themselves altogether, and have adopted formularies of their own. They have always been read with a reserve of freedom in the light of other standards peculiar to Methodism, viz.: the first series of Wesley's sermons and his notes on the New Testament. Hence, while closely connected with the Thirty-nine Articles, and agreeing with them on fundamental positions, the doctrine of Methodism presents certain very distinct modifications on the doctrine of the Anglican Church. It may best be described, as its authoritative exponents admit, as an Evangelical Arminianism laying special emphasis on the doctrine of personal assurance and the witness of the Spirit, which it defines as a consciousness of divine favour through the atonement of Jesus Christ. Substantially it agrees with the Anglican Church and with Protestantism generally, the chief difference being the importance attached to the *personal element* and the experimental realisation of salvation. It is this element which is, as I have said, at once the danger and the strength of Methodism,—its strength in theory, its danger in practice, for it soars into the heights of spiritual ecstasy, and yet trembles on the perilous edge of fanaticism.

A creed so extensive and drawn from sources apparently so indeterminate, might be supposed to suffer much change, but it is quite the reverse, for the Methodist Church is no less, but much more decided in its creed than the Presbyterian or the Church of England. It boasts, and with some reason, of the uniformity of its doctrine; but even uniformity may be bought at too great a price, and the results which

are presented in the Methodist Church are certainly not alluring. Doctrinal superintendence of the clergy is carried to an extent to which no heresy hunts in Presbyterianism can be compared. The Wesleyan minister is not left free as the Anglican or Presbyterian to accept the doctrine of his Church in any expansive sense. He is subjected to frequent tests of orthodoxy, and 'twice every year till he dies or leaves Wesleyanism the opportunity of resigning his position on a change of sentiment is afforded.'

When we pass to consider the constitution of Methodism, we find ourselves in a much less familiar domain. We are confronted by a Church which is neither ancient nor modern, neither Presbyterian nor Episcopal, which discards apostolic succession as a fable, and yet has high ecclesiastical pretensions. We find ourselves in an atmosphere which is distinctly modern, and yet there is much to remind us of ancient and even primitive practices. We miss the old names so full of associations of bishop and presbyter, of diocese and synod, and instead of these we find the prosaic and even parliamentary terms: conference and president, district and chairman, superintendent and circuit. But when we examine more closely the different functions which each of these names indicates, when we see how well they are adapted for their several ends, and what a large measure of success they have attained, we learn the lesson which the history of Christianity increasingly teaches, that the genius of each people and the exigencies of religious life are really the most important tests of the validity of any ecclesiastical system. Methodism as a system of church-government seems

to separate itself from the commonwealth of Christendom, but yet it is a natural and simple development. It is now consolidated into a distinct system, and has assumed, or at least claims to have assumed, 'all the characteristics and responsibilities of an organic Church of the presbyterian type; it has its ministry and its sacraments, and its catechism and all that goes to the perfection of an ecclesiastical organisation.' The analogy between Methodism and Presbyterianism is however not quite exact. The chief power in Methodism is vested in the Conference, but the Conference assumes rights which no General Assembly could venture to claim. It succeeded to the spiritual despotism which Wesley during his lifetime had wielded, and it has steadily refused to bate one jot of its power. In spite of repeated attempts to break in upon its rights, it has stood firm to its legal basis, by which it is made to consist of 100 ministers, the successors of those nominated by Wesley in his Deed of Declaration.

The representation of the laity in the supreme courts of the Church, which is regarded as one of the great safeguards of Presbyterianism, has never yet been granted in all its fulness to the Wesleyan community. The compromise of 1877 was a wise concession, but it still leaves the ultimate power in the hands of the ministers alone. By this compromise the constitution was so far changed as to meet the demands that had been made by the laity all through the history of Methodism for a larger share in the management of affairs. The term 'Conference,' in the Wesleyan community, has from this time three distinct significations. There is the Legal Conference

commonly described as the Legal Hundred, a kind of Inner House, whose sanction is absolutely required to give validity to any vote. But in addition to this there is the Ministerial Conference, consisting of all the ministers in full connection who have permission to attend its sittings; and the Representative Conference, consisting of the President of the Conference, 240 ministers, and 240 laymen. 'According to this plan, the Conference, consisting of ministers only, first holds its Pastoral Session, dealing with the subjects which are recognised as belonging to it, and then holds its Representative Session, in which other subjects specified in the scheme come before it. During the Pastoral Session the Conference consists of the Legal Conference, and all the ministers in full connection with it who have permission from their respective District Meetings to attend its sittings; and during the Representative Session it consists of the Legal Conference, and the Ministerial and Lay Representatives who have been elected according to the scheme. The acts of the Conference, in the wider sense, both during its Pastoral and its Representative Session, are confirmed by the vote of the Legal Conference.'

The President of Conference is chosen annually, and has only a 'primacy of honour,' all the ministers being of one order. Its power is absolute, its word is law. It supplies the place of Bishop and Patriarch, and speaks with equal and even greater authority. In Wesleyanism it is a thoroughly practical assembly, making rhetoric subordinate to business, and looking with disfavour on high-flying oratory. Its meetings are held by turns in the important centres of



Methodism in some large chapel of the town chosen, and always with closed doors. There is no talking to the galleries, for the public are excluded, and even the representatives of the press are denied admittance. The official minutes are the only source of public information. Under the provision that it shall not, nor may appoint any person for more than three years successively to the use and enjoyment of any chapels or premises, except ordained ministers of the Church of England, Conference arranges and disposes of the preachers, and exercises a very strict power of supervision over them, and over the affairs of the Church at large.

Passing from the Conference we may still further recognise the parallel between Methodism and Presbyterianism. The District Meeting is a kind of provincial Synod, the 'Circuit' is practically a Presbytery. All the chapels within a prescribed area are grouped into a circuit under a minister who is called a superintendent. A certain number of circuits form a district, and are placed under a chairman or president, and district meetings, which are really committees of Conference, are held twice a year. They are supposed to meet cases of emergency, which during Wesley's lifetime had been submitted to his personal decision, but their sphere has been gradually extended, and in general they have become the most important element, the very 'sheet-anchor' of the Wesleyan economy. They prepare the business for the 'consideration of the supreme legislative body.' They have full authority to examine candidates for the ministry and probationers, to test the character and inquire into the conduct of the ministers, to

provide for their support, to erect and maintain chapels, to dispose of and distribute the funds, and generally to review the state of Methodism within their bounds, making suggestions and recommendations for the approval of Conference. The district meeting is composed of laymen and ministers, the laymen attending all its sittings for financial and public business. It is to the Conference what our Provincial Synod is to the General Assembly.

The circuit meeting is not exactly like our meeting of Presbytery, though it corresponds in some respects. It consists of all the chapels within a given area, and the ministers are appointed for not more than three years under a superintendent. Each of the ministers visits his classes once every three months, and has personal conversation with every member, giving to all who have approved themselves worthy a ticket of membership. The circuit meeting follows the visitation of the classes, and consists of ministers, stewards, leaders of classes, lay preachers, and all the trustees of chapels.

Such are the main elements in the constitution of Methodism, a system which has scarcely changed in any of its essential features since the days of Wesley. In the lower courts it utilises the lay element to the utmost degree, while it carefully guards the rights and privileges of the clergy. The analogy which we have traced between Methodism and Presbyterianism is often very remote, but the type is the same.

The peculiarities of Methodism as a religious discipline find their expression in the class meeting, which is really the centre of the system. Originally a weekly meeting for religious conversation, consisting

of twelve or more persons under the guidance of a leader, who is usually a layman, it has retained its first form, and upon the whole may be said to serve its purpose well. As a vehicle of instruction, more direct and personal than preaching, it has attained the main object of Methodism, it has sought to make religion a matter of active experience. It has, perhaps, lent itself too easily to the designs of fluent hypocrites when it has not been degraded into a means of mere religious gossip, but it has fairly fulfilled the expectations of Wesley, being at once a means of religious training to the people and of support to the ministry. The class-meetings are the centres of life in each society, and attendance upon them is made a test of membership. In addition to the class-meeting there are other institutions, such as the Love-feasts, the Watch-nights, and the Covenant Service, which have been very useful in developing religious life among the societies. The dangers of these institutions are obvious, and have often been commented on, but practically they are not so great as they might at first sight appear, and be they what they may, they must, as has been said, 'be accounted smaller evils by far, than those of which Methodism has been the cure.'

Not much need be said about the order of worship in Methodist churches. Except in some of the Wesleyan chapels, where the Book of Common Prayer with some slight omissions is still in use, it has few features to distinguish it from an ordinary Presbyterian service, except the boisterous 'Amens,' and pietistic groans, which still in many chapels remind us of the early days of the Revival. The

hymns of the Wesleys, and specially of Charles, which are now the household words of Christendom, are heard in all the churches of Methodism, serve the purpose of a Liturgy, and are a common bond of union.

Enough, I hope, has been said to show, if proof were needed, that the Methodist movement had its roots in a genuine necessity. The type of religious life which it induces has its dangers, and these are neither few nor small. That craving for perpetual excitement which is the bane of every religious revival, the crude analysis of the most subtle phases of spiritual life, the glib narrative of inner experiences, the coarse familiarity which treats God 'as if He were a man in the next street'—all these have been more or less characteristic of Methodists. They have often shown themselves deserving of the cruel epigram of Hazlitt, who described them as a collection of religious invalids—not being well in the body, they had taken refuge in the spirit, not being comfortable in this world, they were seeking for comfort in the next. With their Other-Worldliness there was often a mixture of worldliness. Hence it has become common to associate Methodism, as an eminent novelist has said (one who knew well how to depict this and every other phase of religious experience), with 'low-pitched gables up dingy streets, sleek grocers, sponging preachers, and hypocritical jargon—elements which are regarded as an exhaustive analysis of Methodism in many fashionable quarters.' But the extravagances of the movement and the inconsistencies of its followers are no fair test of the validity of the system itself. The day is long past when we can judge of the Methodist Church on the simple principle of

Sydney Smith, who used the term Methodism to designate all classes of fanatics, not troubling himself to point out the finer shades of lunacy, but treating them as all in one general conspiracy against common sense and rational, orthodox Christianity. It is quite true that the Tabernacle has been the source of much nonsense and madness, but while we recognise this, it cannot blind us to the fact that to Methodism with all its extravagances, the Church of Christ owes a deep debt of gratitude. The results of the system may not be quite commensurate with the large claims of some of its ardent children, but there is no Church among English-speaking people which has not received, directly or indirectly, some access of strength through the much despised revival of the eighteenth century. The glowing language of Methodist historians is not without sound basis in fact. Within a century and a half the movement has compassed the globe, it numbers its adherents on every continent and shore. Its missionaries are almost omnipresent ; five million souls call Wesley their spiritual father in England, fifteen millions in America—while in France, in Spain, in Italy, in Central Asia, in Australia, Africa, and all the islands of the sea his followers are found. It is an empire on which literally the sun never sets, its zeal abroad is unimpaired, its activity at home unflagging. Even in Scotland, where, by the very nature of the case, the direct influence of the movement was very slight, and where Methodism as a system has never been strong, the streams of evangelical earnestness have refreshed and strengthened all the Churches of Knox. There was not the same scope for Wesley's efforts,

the Reformation here had done its work more thoroughly than in England, but there were other reasons also for the comparative failure of Methodism in Scotland. The discipline which it imposes is uncongenial to the Scottish mind ; our natural reserve looks with distrust on its introspective methods, on its class meetings and recitals of experiences, but we cannot help being influenced by its evident earnestness and conscientious activity in Christian work. And if even Scotland has been in some measure influenced by the Methodist Church, much more, it is needless to say, has the mother Church of England. She has profited by the warnings of Wesley, and in the special services now widely adopted, as well as in the growing desire to extend the principle of lay co-operation, she is manifestly seeking to remedy the defects of her system. It cannot be said that the existence of Methodism has ever been, or is even now a menace to the Church in England. Unlike Dissent it has not taken up a position of antagonism, it has stood aloof in armed neutrality, 'the friends of all, the enemies of none.' But the progress of events, and the unavoidable friction of all large communities meeting on common ground, have brought about the usual result. The English Church has rarely shown the power so characteristic of the English nation, of fostering the movements within her own borders, and utilising their forces to strengthen herself. If she had had this power, if she had even shown the adaptability of the Roman Church, she would have retained the Methodist Societies within her own pale, she would have used the administrative genius of Wesley and the glowing eloquence of Whitefield, as Rome

made use of Ignatius Loyola or St. Francis. An order of Methodism within the Anglican community would certainly have been a more satisfactory result than the formation of a new sect, in an age when sects are already too numerous. But the wisdom has been late in coming. The old dream of union, it is true, is still cherished ; and many, both in Methodism and in the Church, look back with regret on the past. But the dream seems to be further than ever from being realised. Advances have been made from time to time by representative men, notably by Dr. Pusey in 1868, but the result has always been to make the separation more distinct and definite, till now (to use words aptly quoted in the same connection by the late Dean of Westminster) :—

‘ They stand aloof, the scars remaining  
Like cliffs that have been rent asunder.’

The Church has taken her own way, Methodism has taken hers ; and the reply of Conference to all advances has practically been the reply of the Eastern Church to the advances of the West : ‘ Become as we are, and we will be as one.’ ‘ It is just as likely,’ says one of the great Methodist leaders, ‘ that Methodism should absorb Anglican Episcopacy, as that Anglican Episcopacy should absorb Methodism.’ The old affectionate relations have been broken down ; the antipathy to Dissent has disappeared ; the type of Methodist doctrine, government, and life has been crystallised into antagonism, whereas the change that has come over the Church herself has led her further and further from the possibility of reunion. She cannot remedy the mistakes of the past. She might have guided the movement if any of her leaders

had had the seeing eye to discern its far-reaching issues. And well would it have been for her and for the cause of religion, if, instead of attempting to suppress, she had sought to regulate and direct what was in reality an earnest effort to bring the knowledge of God to human souls. But she missed her opportunity, and it seems to have gone from her for ever. And yet there is nothing even now that need stand as an impassable barrier between the Mother Church and her daughter. There is nothing in the special features of Methodism that is at all inconsistent with the idea of union. It is impossible, of course, that Methodism should so merge itself in the Church of England as to lose its identity. As a corporation it has a legal basis, and holds its property on this basis alone. Its ministers also are bound by the doctrinal standards of Wesley, but as it was no intention of the founder that they should leave the Church, so neither need this be a barrier to their return. What then hinders? A tradition of continued separation, the twice-told tale of Christian divisions.

Of more interest to the Methodist Church is the question of union within its own borders. At the great Œcumenical Conference, held in 1881, in the City Road Chapel, London, the Pro-Cathedral of Methodism, when delegates from every part of the world were assembled, no less than twenty-seven sects were found to be represented. But this does not by any means indicate, as it might seem at first sight to do, any great diversity either in doctrines or in government between the different branches of Methodism. Time has done its work with these, and has removed many of the differences which called the



various bodies into existence. The great question of ministerial supremacy so fruitful in secession has been practically settled ; slavery, the bone of contention between American Churches, has long ceased. There remains only the Episcopacy, but the form in which it is exercised robs it of its dangers, and even staunch Presbyterians might adopt it without fear. It corresponds more nearly even than the Wesleyan form to the practice of the founder, and is in many ways better fitted to give coherence to his system. There is really no other question that divides the Methodism of the present day, and there is no reason whatever why the Methodism of Britain and even of America should not be a unity save the unreasonable conservatism which seems to overtake every community after it has exhausted its first burst of enthusiasm, and has consolidated itself into a sect and settled into ways of its own.

But the past history of Methodism is its best ground of hope for the future. In the records of Church history, although it is but of yesterday, the Church which claims Wesley as its founder must receive an honourable place. It is, as has been said, of very recent and very humble origin. Yet it has exercised a great and beneficent influence. It has not indeed a history so varied or picturesque as some of the Churches whose story has been told by previous lecturers. It has not the perennial interest attaching to the Church of the Apostles or of the early centuries ; it has not the venerable antiquity of the Greek Church, nor the imperial glory of Rome ; it has not the doctrinal interest of the Lutheran Church, nor the romantic story of the Church of the

Valleys ; it has not the national associations of the English Church nor the immediate personal interest of Presbyterianism ; it has not the intellectual power of the Independents nor the quiet strength of the Society of Friends. Yet it has characteristics of its own which are full of interest and instruction. If it has contributed little to the growth of doctrine, if it has tended in many minds to destroy the idea of the unity of the Church, it has contributed much to the intensity of individual life. It has asserted, and passionately asserted the value of the soul and the need for personal holiness. It has revived the feeling of religious fervour in all the Anglo-Saxon Churches, and doubtless has helped towards this great end in all the Churches of Christendom. Extravagances there have been—errors it may be in doctrine and failures in practice—such are the evils that come in the train of religious enthusiasm,

And who shall marvel if evil went  
Step by step with the good intent ?

But he must be blind to the facts of history and ignorant of the principles which guide the spiritual progress of the race who fastens upon these as the true fruits of the Methodist Church, and ignores the genuine influence that Church has exerted first on the life of England and next on the world at large. The future of Methodism it is not easy to forecast, though many have essayed the task. Enthusiastic historians predict an ever growing triumph till it

Fills the earth with golden fruit  
With ripe Millennial love ;

while those who have little sympathy with its his-

tory declare that it will speedily pass away, giving place to other and darker phases of fanaticism. Undoubtedly the golden age of Methodism is in the past, 'the heyday of its enthusiasm is over,' but yet it has a principle of strength which will enable it to cope with difficulties and antagonisms, it is sustained by a strong, capable, and coherent organisation—an organisation which events have proved to be admirably adapted to practical ends. Though the intensity of its first impulse may have been spent, its resources are far from being exhausted. We may well wish it God speed. Freed from the extravagances that have at several stages marred its career, losing none of its earnestness and strength while discarding all vain grounds of boasting, the Methodist Church has still a great future before it. For when every deduction is made from the glowing estimate of its friends, there remains a record of noble work done in the service of Christ and towards the spread of genuine religion. And that work is its best ground of hope. Whatever the future may be, the past is worthy of honour, and no thoughtful man will think that those words are exaggerated in which Wesley expressed his own conviction: 'It is plain to me that the whole work of God called Methodism is an extraordinary dispensation of His providence.'



## ST. GILES' LECTURES.

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FOURTH SERIES—THE CHURCHES OF CHRISTENDOM.

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### LECTURE XII.

#### UNITY AND VARIETY OF THE CHURCHES OF CHRISTENDOM.

By the Very Rev. JOHN TULLOCH, D.D., LL.D., Principal of St. Mary's College, St. Andrews, Dean of the Order of the Thistle, and one of Her Majesty's Chaplains for Scotland.

TWO hundred years ago, save four, a once famous book was published bearing the title of the *History of the variations of the Protestant Churches*. The object of the book was to expose the varieties of Protestant belief—the supposed contradictory forms which Protestantism had assumed—and so to raise an argument against its divine original. The argument was powerfully conducted, like all that proceeded from the pen of Bossuet, the 'Eagle of Meaux,' as he was called by his admirers. It hit no doubt weak points in the armour of Protestantism, and was hailed as an ample and convincing refutation of its errors; but like many other polemics, once celebrated and supposed to be

successful, it is now found to have little force or meaning in the sense in which it was intended. It is not that its arguments have in turn fallen before other arguments, but that the course of thought has passed it by. And this is the way more than any other that the great contentions, especially of theologians, at length fall flat. The world may have resounded with them in their day, and opposing hosts cheered the respective combatants, while the mightiest interests were supposed to hang upon the wordy conflict ; but in the meantime the silent foot of time slowly advances, the very structure of human thought changes, the mist of excited controversy clears away, and in the new light men are found occupying fresh positions, and looking over the field of history and of dogma with quite different eyes. It is impossible ever again to rouse by the old watchwords. All life has died out of them. There are creatures indeed who prowl about the battle-fields, haunted by the ghosts of former struggle. There are minds in theology, perhaps more than in other subjects, incapable of rising into the broader scientific atmosphere where things are seen in a new light. Such minds must be left to beat the dust of ancient controversies over and over again ; but time has already left them behind, and religious thought gone in quest of fresh fields.

‘Variation,’ instead of being a note of falsehood, as it was to Bossuet, is now recognised as a natural expression of the Divine. The inner life of nature, and mind, and spirit everywhere shows itself in diversity of form and appearance. The history of the Christian Church from the day of Pentecost until now is a

'history of variations,' that is to say, of diversified developments in thought, government, and ritual. The Divine spirit breathed into Humanity by the Gospel has expanded and ramified in its very richness and force of expression. This diversified fulness is the measure of its irrepressible energy. Like an ample and glowing canvas from the hand of a great artist, it is the large and various life which Christendom everywhere displays that testifies to its divine character. In the face of facts now admitted by all unsectarian minds it is pathetic and pitiful to think how almost all Churches have pursued a ghost of 'uniformity' which never lived, a shadow that never had substance. There has been unity of faith indeed, and even to a certain extent unity of doctrine, running through all Christendom; but the note of Christian history—of the successive developments of church thought, and church order, and church life—is variety and not unity. And Christianity could never have been otherwise the living movement in human progress which it has been. It is the intensity of the life within that seeks such varied expression, that clothes itself in such multiplied forms. If the Church had been what many still dream it once was and may again become, a uniform mechanism of means and ends, with undeviating orders and rites of worship, it would have perished long ago with the advance of civilisation. It would have been the creature of its age, and would have decayed and vanished as Humanity left the past behind and stretched forward into the future. The condition of all life is a capacity of self-development which answers diversely to diverse environment, and be-

comes more manifold as the power within swells with a richer increase of sap and vigour.

So it is that the picture of the Churches of Christendom which has been presented to you in the series of lectures which I close is not one of mere light and darkness, where all is true on one side, and all is false, or partakes of falsehood, on the other; such a picture as Catholicism on the one hand and Protestantism on the other presented to the mind of Bossuet, or again, reversely, such a picture as Evangelical Protestantism in contrast to Romanism, or again of Episcopacy in contrast with Presbyterianism, or of Presbyterianism in contrast with Episcopacy, presents to other minds; but a marvellously diversified picture passing through many phases, and touched everywhere with diverse colour. In tracing the growth of the Primitive Church—of the Church of the second and third and later centuries—of the Greek, and again of the great Latin Church—of the Church of the Waldenses; in describing the modern Churches of the Reformation, with all their distinctions—the key-note has been ‘development’ and not contrariety or mere difference. I have been struck with the frequency with which this comparatively modern word is used.

The time was, and not long ago in Scotland, when the scent of heresy would have been found in the word, and the idea which it denotes; when our several Churches pleased themselves with the delusion that they were all respectively exact mirrors of the Primitive Church, and of what the Church ought always and everywhere to be. The ‘*quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus*’ was fifty years ago in Scotland and England alike the accepted character-

istic of the Church. Many of you will remember what effect the words had upon Dr. Newman, and those who were conjoined with him in the Oxford movement. The thought of our own Church was hardly different, although the model by which the Church was judged was entirely different. The note of uniformity was absolutely unlike in the two cases; but the idea of uniformity prevailed in the one case no less than the other. To the modern historical mind all this is changed. The life of the Church, no less than the life of Nature, seen in its true light, is found to be endlessly varied. It is an ever-changing picture, not merely of incident, but of opinion and of rite—one phase passing into another by a natural law of development: each new epoch springing out of the old, under the influence of all the forces operating in the preceding time. History, in short, is an organism, growing from stage to stage and not in any sense a manufacture,—a living evolution of ideas and not a mechanical manipulation of parties. This fertile conception has completely changed the aspect of Christian history, how completely may be seen by placing alongside each other such books as Milner's *Church History*, or Newman's *Arians of the Fourth Century*, and Stanley's *Account of the Council of Nicæa*. In the last case there is the picture of a living movement of facts as they developed themselves in natural and interesting sequence; in the others there is not only no picture at all, but a sectarian distortion both of characters and events. The sectarian and un-historical spirit has been unhappily rampant in Scotland, so that the very face of our ecclesiastical life has been hidden under loads of prejudice, and its



picturesque variety of movement misrepresented now on this side, and now on that. It is in all respects therefore a favourable omen, that the polemical note has been so entirely absent from the Lectures delivered here this winter, and that the great aim has been not to establish foregone or abstract conclusions, but to describe living forces, and the inner affinities by which they have passed into one another.

How vividly varied is the picture which has been presented to you from the Church of Pentecost to the Church of John Knox—from the Church of St. James and St. Paul with their simple creed and unorganised worship, to the Church of Irenæus and Tertullian, the early Roman Church, so vividly pictured by Hippolytus, and again the Church of Athanasius and Augustine—until Christendom is seen, so to speak, to fall asunder in the great Churches of the East and the West; while a simple faith survives with more or less purity in Waldensian valley or mystic cloister, and again bursts forth with varying intensity in the Churches of the Reformation. How immeasurable the contrast between ‘the upper room’ where the first disciples ‘continued steadfastly in prayer with the women and Mary,’ to Athanasius seated on his throne, or the swelling choir that arose around Ambrose of Milan, or the plaudits that greeted the ‘golden-mouthed,’ as he discoursed in the capital of the east; or again, between the ‘two or three gathered together,’ in lonely valley, or on bleak moorland, or within prison walls with Fox and Bunyan, and the great Assembly under Cathedral dome or lofty abbey! The imagination can hardly picture scenes more widely contrasted or

institutions more varied, if the word 'institution' can be applied to the congregations of the faithful among the mountains of the Cevennes, or the uplands consecrated by the Scottish Covenant.

There are some of course who will not see the note of the Church in these fragments of Christendom, who try to draw the line here or there, round the Roman or the Greek, or the Anglican, or the Presbyterian, or the Methodist Church. But the common Christian sense rejects all such conclusions, and the historian knows nothing of such limitations. Christendom is neither Anglican nor Presbyterian, nor Roman, nor Greek, nor Methodist, nor Congregationalist. It embraces all. Within its ample bosom it finds room for early saint and martyr, Greek and Latin doctor, mediæval monk, 'poor men of Lyons,' and rich men who have brought their wealth to its altars, the Quaker who refuses to take his hat off beneath the sacred roof, and French and Italian villagers who prostrate themselves before the rude crucifix on the mountain side, the Covenanter who lifts his wild psalm to the skies, the Methodist who pours forth his disconnected prayer in wayside chapel, and the decorous Anglican who hardly knows prayer beyond the well-ordered words of his service-book. Whatever our several dogmas may say, we know that all these types of worship are really Christian.

It is unnecessary to maintain that all are equally Christian. Romanism may contain many errors—Quakerism may undervalue Christian ordinances. Multiplicity of form and the 'traditions of men' may have turned aside the one from the simple truth—the very fervour of devotion, and love of 'the simplicity that

is in Christ' may have led the other unduly to despise Church order and authority. For our practical guidance it may be of the highest moment to each of us that we should see what is right and what is wrong in the constitution of the several Churches of Christendom, so that we may choose the right and avoid the wrong. But whatever be our view of the evils of Romanism, who would refuse the name of Christian to the Latin Church with its splendid history and its roll of saints; and whatever be our view of the sacraments, who would deny to the Society of Friends the very spirit of Christ in meekness and long-suffering love! Such things may have been possible in the seventeenth century. Romanism on the one hand and Quakerism on the other then appeared to the Presbyterian so absolutely evil as not to deserve the Christian name. Nor do I impute any blame in saying this. There were many reasons then to account for such narrowness. I am speaking of facts, not drawing inferences from them—and I think it necessary to say this because there are minds who fail to see the difference between stating facts and implying an opinion regarding them. The Church antagonisms of the seventeenth century were hard and fast. Ecclesiastical parties then never thought of sparing one another, or seeing any good in the attitude of one another. They were struggling respectively for life and death. Such a course of lectures as you have heard here this winter would have been impossible in the St. Giles of those days. It does not follow that we are in all things better Christians on this account. We ought to be so, but are we not in many things lacking, less fitted 'to

endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ'? So far indeed we are more enlightened. We have higher means of estimating and judging all the phenomena of Christendom than was then possible. We see more plainly how some of the most dubious aspects of Romanism grew up; how Quakerism was justified in the face of oppression and dogmatic hardness. We can trace how the most extravagant or erroneous developments often sprang from genuine religious impulse, and were in no degree combinations of evil men for evil purposes, or the results of mere pravity of will determined on its own ends. We can measure causes and effects with a more luminous intelligence and a larger appreciation of circumstances.

Who now doubts, for example, who has studied all the phenomena of the case, that Methodism, with all its early extravagances, was a genuine movement of the Divine Spirit within the Church of the eighteenth century? On the great principle of '*ibi Ecclesia ubi Spiritus Dei*,' the Methodist Societies which have grown into the great Methodist Churches of England and America, were at the time higher expressions of Christian life than anything commonly found in the Church of England. The same thing is true of what is known as Jansenism within the Church of Rome in the seventeenth century. Who that knows the history of Pascal and his sisters can doubt that a higher Christian spirit animated them than their opponents? To the traditional polemic on both sides Jansenism and Methodism are alike schisms; to the historian and the Christian common sense everywhere they are both not only real developments of the divine life,

but higher developments than the stagnant so-called orthodoxy which persecuted them. The historian in short judges from within and not from without—by the spirit and not by the letter—by the fact as he sees it with his own eyes, and not by the dictum of Pope or of Parliament. And so he recognises the true note of the Church, not in any inherited order, or self-constituted prestige, which to his vision is purely imaginary, but in the presence of Christian truth and life wherever it is found.

If the divine life is repressed in one channel, it bursts forth in another. It cannot be confined from without, or shut up within one mechanical order; and so the history of Christendom is 'a history of variations.' The same strong life of faith and love moves through many phases, adapts itself to many emergencies, and reappears in altered rites and institutions. The succession is not lost, but it is a succession of the spirit and not of the letter. Christendom embraces all forms that spring from the common root. All are inspired, or profess to be inspired, by the same spirit of love and prayer. All are Christian, not by any mere euphemism or compliment of speech such as is common even to the Sacerdotalist—but by *fact*, by vital affinities expressed in their very variety. They are a part of the Catholic Church, if not equal parts of it, and what God has joined, and sanctioned, and blessed, we are not to put asunder.

The unity in this variety will appear more fully in the sequel; but let us notice further now how the variety of which we have been speaking is not merely a law of historical development, but one attended

with real advantage and benefit. It is only the diversified manifestation of Christian thought and life that reveals all their riches and manifold adaptations to the heart and conscience. It has required, so to speak, all the several Churches of Christendom to witness to the fulness of the Gospel. We see in the Primitive Church the fresh outburst of the 'light which was given to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of the people Israel,'—the free and overflowing charismata running even into disorderliness. In the Church of the second and third and still more in that of the fourth and fifth centuries, we see all the elements of order, not only growing, but hardening into oppression. In Greek Christianity we see the elaboration and triumph of Christian dogma; in the great Latin Church the development of Christian art, music, poetry, painting, architecture; in it and in the Celtic Church, the development of missionary enterprise. However we may deplore the errors of the Latin Church, we should never forget our vast indebtedness to it. Its forms of art ravish the Christian heart to this day. Its hymns are sung, its prayers repeated in all our Churches; they are become the treasury of the devout in all lands. The glow of its aggressive zeal has helped to kindle the fire of the modern missionary spirit, and been a noble incentive to Christian endurance in exile and persecution. Turning to the Churches of the Reformation, what do we not owe to the truth-loving courage of each, to the bravery of earlier Lutheranism, the severe righteousness of Calvinism, the marvellous criticism and science of later Lutheranism, to all the beautiful

sanctities and noble learning of Anglicanism, and the strong pure hand of Presbyterianism,<sup>1</sup> to the simple inward sustaining devotion of Quakerism, and the freedom, faith, and fervour of Congregationalism and Methodism! The time would fail to tell all that might be said on this subject, how each Church has witnessed in its origin and history to some vital element of Christian truth and life, without which modern Christendom would have been poorer, and humanity been less blessed than it is. In so far as the several Churches of Christendom have shown a merely divisive spirit they have each and all failed to represent their source. There is nothing good in mere division itself, still less in a spirit that loves division. But in point of fact the separations of Christendom, if not free from this evil spirit, have yet in the main grown out of, as they have embodied, noble principles, the full value of which we would not have known without them, and in the possession of which there has been infinite blessing, if also suffering.

But it is now more than time to turn to the other aspect of the subject, and to endeavour to indicate the unity which amidst all this diversity underlies the Churches of Christendom. It is not difficult to do this. The only difficulty is in selecting and emphasising the most distinguishing features of unity.

I. The Churches of Christendom are *one* in their common recognition of a Divine Founder. In all the Gospels there is no more significant passage than that in which our Lord elicits from St. Peter the well-

<sup>1</sup> Speaking of Scottish Presbyterianism, Wordsworth emphasises 'the strong hand of her purity.'—*Excursion*, B. 1.

known confession, 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.'<sup>1</sup> This was the revelation of the Father, our Lord says, to the mind of St. Peter; and his intuition of this great truth made him, amidst all his faults, in a special sense a foundation-stone of the Church: 'And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter (rock), and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.'<sup>2</sup> However we may particularly interpret this statement, there can be no doubt of its general meaning. The confession of St. Peter that Jesus was 'the Christ, the Son of the living God,' is held forth as the true basis of the Christian Church. Apostles and prophets, saints and martyrs, doctors, presbyters and bishops, are only rocks or 'pillars' in the House of God, in so far as they rest on this foundation. 'For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.'<sup>3</sup> All the Churches of Christendom claim to acknowledge this fundamental truth. They claim to rest on a Divine Personality, to which they all appeal as their highest authority. In so far they are alike, and separate themselves absolutely from all systems of Nature-religion.

This great distinction deserves special attention. It is sometimes supposed that there are forms of Christianity and even Christian Churches, but slightly removed from eclectic systems of philosophy, which acknowledge good in every humanitarian theory which seeks to elevate man above the brutes around him, and inspire him with a sense of duty and self-sacrifice. I pass no judgment on any of these theories, whether propagated in the coarser name of Secularism,

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xvi. 16.<sup>2</sup> Matt. xvi. 18.<sup>3</sup> I Cor. iii. 11.



or the higher name of the Religion of Humanity. I am not now dealing with them, or in any degree estimating them. But I wish to emphasise what all who know anything of the matter will acknowledge to be true, that any differences that separate Churches are as nothing in comparison with the difference that separates the least doctrinal of our Churches from such systems. It is not merely that the Divine idea excluded by the one is represented by the other, but it is that Christ, as 'the image of the invisible God,' as at once 'Son of Man,' and 'Son of God,' is the living root of all Churches, and acknowledged to be so, in so far as they have living root at all.

It is, of course, true that Churches differ now, as in the past they have differed, in their dogmatic definition of the Divinity of our Lord. There are even those that deny His Divinity in any orthodox sense ; while others, while accepting the truth in a general sense, do not formulate it in the language of the Catholic Creeds. They prefer to speak of Christ in the language of Scripture, and may deny to this language the meaning given to it by Catholic orthodoxy. There were Jewish Churches in the first days of Christianity that undoubtedly occupied this attitude. I cannot pause to enter into discussion, or to clear ground which is intelligible to all scholars. Heretical or not, all these Churches, even where they have differed most from Catholic dogma on this subject, yet in their own sense affirmed the Divine character and personality of Christ. They recognised in Him not only the Divine—which of itself would separate them utterly from all mere moral or philosophical cults—but the highest expression of the Divine, the

Son of God no less than the Son of Man—the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, ‘full of grace and truth.’ It is well known that the ancient Arians, while denying the co-equality of the Father and the Son, not only affirmed in their own sense the Divinity of Christ, but affirmed it in the most definite manner, saying that He was ‘perfect God,’ ‘the only begotten.’<sup>1</sup> The supposed Arians of last century represented by the well-known Dr. Samuel Clarke, specially declared that ‘with the First or Supreme Cause, or Father of all things, there has existed from the beginning a Second Divine Person, which is His Word or Son.’<sup>2</sup> Even the modern Unitarian speaks of Christ as ‘the Holy One of God,’ ‘the transcendent Revelation of the Most High.’<sup>3</sup> The lowest of such Churches is really nearer to the highest—ininitely nearer—than they are to any non-Christian cult. They all rest on a Divine foundation, although they may not see that foundation in the same light, or define it in the same terms. How vast, how significant, how far-reaching in thought and action is such a unity, is most truly felt by those who have most deeply pondered it, and the mass of outlying speculation in our day, which not only ignores but defies all the radical ideas on which Christian Theism rests.

II. But the several Churches of Christendom acknowledge in common not only a divine Founder, but a divine ideal of human life. With one and all of them man is a being of divine origin and divine destiny. He is the creature and child of God ; he

<sup>1</sup> πλήρης θεός . . . μονογενής—Letter from Arius to Eusebius.

<sup>2</sup> Clarke’s *Scripture Doctrine of Trinity*, p. 210.

<sup>3</sup> *Studies of Christianity*, by Dr. James Martineau, pp. 196-7.

is here for the purpose of divine education ; he has before him an 'eternal life.' These are all ideas of the most definite kind—they imply a distinct theory of human life here, and a common hope of life everlasting. I am not aware of any Christian Church that does not recognise and teach such truths. I have never heard of any doctrine held by professing Christian people at variance with them. All teach that the life of man is divine in its root, divine in its essential character, however fallen and debased, and divine in its destination. The manner in which those ideas are apprehended may differ greatly ; the old statement of man's creation in Paradise on the sixth day may not be accepted in any literal sense, nor the story of the Fall esteemed an historical narrative. The manner in which our human life is disciplined and educated may be differently conceived. There are Churches that more conspicuously recognise the process of divine love, and others more the process of divine severity ; there are those to whom the keynote of divine education is 'God dealeth with you as with sons,' 'for what son is there whom He loveth and chasteneth not ?'—there are others to whom the keynote is, 'How shall we escape if we neglect this great salvation ?' 'It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.' There are some Churches, again, more than others, that have taken not only the present, but the future of human life into their keeping, and claim to have a clear vision of Heaven and Hell, and of the fate of mankind according to their relation to the truths that they teach, while others draw the veil of God's mercy over the future, and refuse to sit in judgment on

its apportionments. I do not say that these differences are unimportant, or that they may not gravely affect the interpretation of that divine ideal of human life on which they all rest. But it is none the less true that they all do rest on such a divine ideal, and that apart from it they have no meaning. The most differing dogmas of our Churches, in short, on such a subject, have a common unity, and a unity that is utterly at variance with every system of thought outside the Christian sphere. All alike repel the fundamental principle of every materialistic school that man is merely a higher animal, the outcome of mere nature-forces, like every other form of natural life around him. To the one 'man is of the earth, earthy,' to the second he is akin to 'the Lord from heaven.' Language cannot measure the distinction of thought here—as elsewhere between all mere human theory and the divine theory of the Church and of Christendom generally. In the one case there are mere differences of interpretations of a common view, in the other case there is a schism which cleaves to the very heart of thought and is absolutely impassable.

III. All this becomes still more apparent in the recognition of a still further unity common to all Churches, and springing directly it may be said out of these other two, or essentially connected with them,—the recognition, namely, of divine Power as alone able to exalt and purify human nature, or in other words 'to save man.' The Church is not only divine in its foundation and divine in its component members, but the only Power by which it can be built up, or in other words by which Humanity can be transformed and sanctified is Divine. 'By grace are ye saved

through faith.' Grace is the only effectual agent in the spiritual kingdom acknowledged by all Christian theologians, if not by all alike, and faith is the only organ by which grace can be received. But here surely some will say I have come upon a differentiating rather than a uniting feature in the Churches of Christendom. Is it not notorious that there are Churches that disparage 'grace;' and is it not just the note of the Reformation Churches in contrast to the Latin and Greek Church, that salvation is by faith, whereas those Churches virtually hold that it is by works? Is not this a radical difference cleaving the Churches asunder, and which no use of eclectic language can modify or put out of sight? I am not much moved by such assertions, although I know there are many minds to whom they will appear satisfactory.

It is true that there are Churches that seem to obscure both in their teaching and practice the doctrines of grace. It is true that the system of thought known as Romanism is at variance, so far as I can judge, with the full assertion of these doctrines, and that the spring of the German, as of the Genevan Reformation, was more than anything else the up-rising consciousness of the need of divine grace in the human heart, as opposed to the 'works of righteousness,' whether moral or formal, prescribed by the mediæval Church. It may be granted that the main tendency both in the Greek and Latin Church to this day is to put the Church and the requirements of the Church in the place of grace as understood by Protestants. I do not wish to minimise such differences, or to consider them unimportant. But admitting them to the fullest extent it is nevertheless true that

there is no Church that has deliberately placed salvation anywhere save in a divine Source. Christ may seem hidden beneath the mass of observances interposed between Him and the soul ; but Christ is there, and the only true good to the soul is declared by every intelligent Romanist to be in the divine Source and not in the human means. Not only so, but the authoritative exposition of Roman theology, the Tridentine Decrees, declare that it is only in and by the sufferings of Christ that we are reconciled to God and made one with Him. 'He has obtained justification for us by His most holy passion upon the Cross and satisfied God the Father for us.'<sup>1</sup> Not only so, but the same Decrees have laid down that if any one affirm that man can be justified by his own works apart from divine grace through Christ, he is anathema.<sup>2</sup> I make no comment on these statements. I draw no inference from them, for or against the general system of Roman teaching. I merely give them, and no one will venture to dispute that they are a part of the Creed of the Latin Church.

The Church of Rome, therefore, however it may have obscured the great truth of salvation by Grace, has never denied it. Nay, it has affirmed the truth even when its practice seemed to ignore and repel it. Even in Luther's day the doctrine was still living in the Church although hidden out of sight. For greatly as the study of the Bible itself helped Luther, and he was brought to see the depth of his sins only in the

<sup>1</sup> *Conc. Trid.*, Sess. vi. cap. 7.

<sup>2</sup> *Conc. Trid.*, Sess. vi. can. 1, Si quis dixerit, hominem suis operibus, quae vel per legis doctrinam fiant, absque divina per Christum gratia, posse justificari coram Deo, anathema sit.

light of Scripture, and in the same light his own incapacity to deliver himself from them, yet it was from the Church itself in the person of Staupitz, the vicar-general of his own order of Augustines, that he found the truth. 'Through him,' he said, 'the light of the Gospel first dawned out of the darkness on my heart.' It is well that we should remember this, and that corrupt as the mediæval Church had become, it still cherished the true light if 'hidden away in obscure corners in a few hearts.' As Luther in his distress of mind unbosomed himself to this pious man, lamenting his sins as always too strong for him, he replied, 'I have myself vowed more than a thousand times to lead a holy life, and as often broken my vows. I now trust only in the mercy and grace of God in Christ.'

I need add nothing to these words. Is there any Protestant preacher, speaking with all the impressive story of Protestantism behind him, could state more clearly, or with more touching force, the great truth of salvation only by grace? The Roman Church may have uttered itself otherwise by other voices; but have not also Protestant teachers sometimes given an 'uncertain sound'? Churches are not to be judged by even the most distinguished of their sons who have spoken in their names. They are to be judged by their professed creed. And although all the Churches of Christendom may have at times made more of themselves, and more of the traditions of men, than of the power of God, they have, one and all, embodied in the very heart of their creed the primitive Pauline principle, that a man becomes just not by doing just acts, but by receiving righteousness in Christ.

We must first be just, and then we shall do just actions.<sup>1</sup>

Here, therefore, again, the difference between all the Churches, variously as they may expound the principle, is as nothing to the fundamental difference between Christianity and every system of mere Natural Ethics. In the one case the difference is one of emphasis—now on this side and now on that—a difference indicated and symbolised from the very beginning in St. James and St. Paul. The head of the Jewish Church seeing before him the dangers of a barren faith, of a religious profession so hollow that it could entertain itself with the alternative, ‘I have faith—thou hast works,’ was naturally led to emphasise the practical side of religion. St. Paul again, seeing in the Galatian Church a spirit of religious enthusiasm—but not according to knowledge—a love of the Divine, but no stable hold of it; so that his converts were easily turned to another Gospel—which was yet not another—entreated them to recognise how little after all any law or works could do for them. ‘Having begun in the Spirit,’ did they hope to be ‘made perfect in the flesh?’ The question answered itself. But while St. James and St. Paul thus emphasise different sides of the Divine life—to both of them alike the only true life of man is Divine—the only secret of moral strength is Christ. The life is only strong that is hid with Christ in God.

And this is the teaching of the Church universally; different as may be the point of view from which it

<sup>1</sup> ‘All Christians,’ says Winer, ‘agree that the regeneration of man, wherein he is restored to righteousness in Christ, takes place under the influence of divine grace.’—*Confessions of Christendom*, Eng. Trans., p. 145.



is apprehended. I do not say that views at variance with it have not been taught in all ages of the Church, and in some Churches more prominently than in others ; but I say it is a note of unity in all Churches that human life can only be redeemed from sin and misery in Christ—that the way of virtue is the way of faith, laying hold of the Divine. The impulsive power of righteousness is not within ourselves, but in God. 'Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy are we saved, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.'<sup>1</sup> What if there are those who, in narrow prejudice or mistaken zeal, would pin the mercy of God to certain forms, and these forms those of their own Church? What if the Apostolic laver of regeneration be confounded with the laver of a certain order of baptism? All such conceptions are to be deplored, because in the eyes of Christian reason and New Testament thought, they are, if logically developed, inconsistent with the very idea of the Divine which they imply. But the Divine idea underlies them all. They have no meaning apart from it. It is their very jealousy of this idea that makes certain Churches guard it by forms which they would place on a level with the idea itself. But no form, however truly, or properly, or rightfully associated with the Divine Spirit, can absorb that Spirit or become absolutely identified with it. It transcends all, as God transcends all His manifestations. It lives in every heart that will receive it. It animates the forms of every Church that owneth the one name. I know of no Church from

<sup>1</sup> Titus iii. 5.

the Church of St. James, which plainly, as depicted in his epistle, had many grievous faults, to the Church of George Fox, or John Bunyan, or John Wesley, no Church described in this series of Lectures in which the Divine life may not be lived ; because in no one of them is the power of this life denied. It may be conceived after diverse manners. It may be regarded as a spiritual authority, or as an 'inward light,' or as an awful Holiness shadowing the soul ; it may come in sweetness and peaceful order from the day of baptism, or it may come in the day of manhood and of sin, like 'a mighty rushing wind' shaking the conscience till it cry out, 'God be merciful to me a sinner.' But in all and through all it is the same divine Power. Man is recognised as the creature of God, and God is recognised as not only his Creator, but his Redeemer. All Churches witness to the divine symbol of the Gospels and of the Catacombs as the perfect type of Grace—the Good Shepherd in search of his sheep. And when the Good Shepherd has found the lost one, 'He lays it on his shoulders rejoicing.'<sup>1</sup> What an exquisite and moving picture of Divine Love ! There is nothing outside of Christianity in the least degree comparable with it. There is no divine search after man in any other system of religious thought. There is no answering voice of help to the despairing sinner's cry ; only the voice of Nature—to try again—to do better. There is elsewhere no balm for the wounded feet, as they tread life's thorny way, no Divine Physician to bind up the broken in heart, or to lift up the feeble and tempted soul. All strength from above is denied.

<sup>1</sup> Luke xv. 5.

But every Church, the most imperfect, and every Christian is a living witness to the reality of divine sympathy and love in the Great Shepherd—to the great truth, that the help of man is not in himself, but in God—that Humanity can only be elevated and purified from above, not from below—by grace and not by works.

In one sense it may be held to be a small thing to be able to say this of all Churches. For after all it is only to say that they are Christian, that they embody Christian and not mere natural or Pagan ideas. But in another sense it is surely much to be able to say that all Churches, differing as they do in so many particulars, not only are built on one divine foundation, but united in one divine message, that all testify to one God and Father of all, to one Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, in whom the most fallen may rise, and the weakest may grow strong.

IV. There are other and more special points in which the unity of the Churches as a whole might be shown, but I cannot enter into details within the limits of a lecture. On only one further point I would say a word. I have spoken of the divine ideal of human life, which all our Churches recognise—much as they may all fall short of it in practical exemplification and illustration. But the Churches of Christendom not only recognise a divine ideal underlying every human life, and capable of being restored. They further recognise such an ideal in relation to the world at large, they discern a real Kingdom of God being developed through all human history. All Christian Churches witness to a Divine order of righteousness and peace greater

than any rule of evil, and which will yet triumph over all evil. They preach in short a divine Optimism, while recognising with a deeper glance than any philosophy all the elements of loss and suffering in the world which in our time, as in previous times, have been woven into a theory of Pessimism. The world is no doubt very evil : what religion, not even Buddhism, has ever recognised this evil more pathetically than Christianity ? Who ever saw all the misery of human life like Him who said ' There is no sorrow like unto my sorrow ' ? Who ever faced its malignity as He did ? And yet how pure and beautiful withal His faith in the ideal—how confident His trust in the Good—how sure for Him its victory at last ! It is not for us to know the times and the seasons which the Father hath kept in His own power, but the kingdom of God will yet come, and righteousness shall banish wickedness, and peace banish hate, and they shall neither hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the Lord.

Here also, of course, there are very different modes of conceiving and setting forth the Divine Truth. The kingdom or city of God which is to be evolved from all the confusion of the present, presents a varying picture to the Christian imagination. And it may be thought that there are prevalent Christian dogmas which greatly limit, if they do not destroy any optimistic view of the future. If only a ' remnant ' shall be saved, where shall the ungodly and sinners appear ? While ' many are called ' but ' few are chosen. ' The doctrine of the Elect is certainly a doctrine of Scripture no less than that of an ultimate and universal diffusion of righteous-

ness and peace. I do not pretend here nor anywhere to reconcile the broad issues into which all Christian mysteries run. I will only say that here, as in other respects, the great antitheses of Christianity are never mere abstractions, but only the idealisation of principles seen to be at work in the world around us. The Divine progress of Humanity is plainly, according to fact, to be a process of *selection* no less than of *diffusion*. But whatever darkness may rest on the fate of individuals or of nations, this darkness is not held to invalidate the brightness of the coming glory. 'The city of God' shall arise, it may be from amidst many ruins ;—but it shall arise. 'And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He shall dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.'<sup>1</sup>

Do not suppose I am wandering towards any Millennial vision. I do not incline to hold any definite doctrine as to the manner in which God will accomplish His purposes for the world. So far as I can see there are no clear data for forming such a doctrine,—I venture not to lift any veil, or draw any picture. I am satisfied with the spiritual reality, and the assurance that there is a kingdom of God against which no power of darkness or evil will ever prevail; that this kingdom which the eye of faith may now see,—dim though it be, and scarred and broken,—will yet be made manifest and glorious. Is it not such an assurance that sustains in all

<sup>1</sup> Rev. xxi. 3, 4.

Churches Christian effort, inspires Christian hope, and emboldens missionary enthusiasm, gives courage to philanthropy, and endurance to suffering? An ideal of this kind—however differently conceived,—is a common possession of Christendom. It may exist, but it can hardly be said to live elsewhere. I know of nothing in humanity itself to inspire and sustain such an ideal. If our only hope be in the facts of the world as they are and have been, I should despair, and a Pessimism, which seeks annihilation as the goal of being, and insensibility as the highest bliss, would seem no mere madness. Looking at the world by itself—apart from the background of Divine love in which Christianity sets it—Pessimism seems as reasonable as any Optimism. Who will measure the sustaining life that has come out of the common faith and hope of all our Churches? the genuine ‘enthusiasm of Humanity,’ which has had its perennial spring here. Even when its divine parentage has been disowned, the love of man has come of the inspiration of Divine Love, and the self-sacrifice which knows not Christ has yet been born at the foot of the Cross.

But we must draw to a close. I have spoken of the unity of the Churches of Christ in the midst of their variety. I have not spoken of ecclesiastical unity, for several reasons. It was not the subject before me when I suggested the title of this Lecture. Unity in certain aspects, we have seen, is a mere imagination. It has never existed within the Roman Church itself,—as exemplified by many names from Augustine and Pelagius to Abelard and Bernard, Aquinas and Scotus, Dominican and Franciscan,

Jansenist and Jesuit—in our own day, Vaticanist and Old Catholic,—all severally representing the most diverse types of thought and belief. *Quot homines, tot sententiæ.* No outward Unity, however it may limit and restrain such differences, can destroy them. They live in the very life of Christianity; and any outward unity which would try to ignore, still more to reject them, would be a curse and not a blessing. I am not enamoured of schemes of ecclesiastical unity. In the past they have been the cloak of Sacerdotalism. In our own day, in our colonies, Presbyterian union has unhappily been the prelude to theological oppression. Any union of Churches which would enable the lower, which are the larger elements in all Churches, the unreflective and dogmatic many to assail and silence the few real students of Christian opinion and inquirers after higher truth that any Christian Church produces, would be a pure disaster to Christendom. It would bind the eyes of Christian Science and of free Faith at once. A unity of this kind is in no sense Christian. The whole past of Christendom, the whole history of religious thought, furnish an illustration of its folly and impracticability. All facts belie it as at the best a dream, a delusion of the spiritual fancy playing with theories, rather than dealing with realities.

Nor is it ever to be forgotten that distinction is not disunion. As a great Christian writer, whose *Life and Letters* many are now reading with interest,<sup>1</sup> has said,—‘Distinction is opposed to separation as life to death.’ Distinctions were never

<sup>1</sup> Maurice’s *Life and Letters*, vol. ii. p. 325.

more rife than in the Primitive Church. They are a note of health and not of decay. They are *in* nature—in the Christian nature, as in every other form of healthful activity; and to aim at any union which would destroy variety of national, intellectual, and spiritual endowment, is to aim at a chimæra which can never be realised, and which, if it could, would only end in the monotony of death. It is not diversity, but contrariety, not distinction, but separation—unbrotherliness, ‘the spirit that lusteth to envy,’—that is evil. No amount of what is called incorporate union would ever cure this evil, so long as its roots remain,—so long as narrowness of mind, prejudice of heart, and envy of each other’s good, are nearer to us than gladness and thanksgiving in each other’s progress. These are the roots of bitterness among us that spring up and defile many. When our Churches cast out the unchristian leaven of sect-seeking and self-seeking, that is still so powerful in all of them, and by its malign influence darkens and impedes those Divine ideals of which I have been speaking, then they will be unable to keep separate from one another. They shall come from the east and the west, and the north and the south, and say, ‘Come, let us build the house of the Lord our God. Let us repair the waste places, and the desolations of many generations.’ Then ‘the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water,’ when love shall fill all Christian hearts, and the beauty of the Lord is upon all Christian Churches. In other words, union will come through an increase of light, and love, and peace, and the



clearer recognition of common truths and common ideals,—but never in any other way; and least of all will it ever come by assaults upon one another, or by glorying in our own way as the only divine way.

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Edinburgh University Press:

T. AND A. CONSTABLE, PRINTERS TO HER MAJESTY.







